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AUG., 1916  
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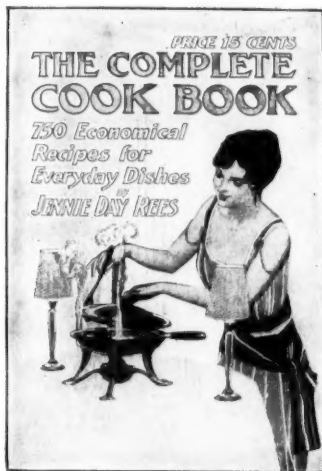
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A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 23

• AUGUST, 1916

Number 5

## The Anatomy of Love

By Arthur Stringer

Author of "The Prairie Wife," "Phantom Wives," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICKS

A delightful romance by a writer new to the pages of SMITH'S. Mr. Stringer's "Prairie Wife" has been one of the big literary successes of the year.

### CHAPTER I.

THERE is just one thing, Waggles, before you go."

"Yes, sir," Waggles replied meekly.

"I am overlooking this—er—this indiscretion on your part, though the fact remains that it *was* an indiscretion. Undergraduates of this college have been distinctly forbidden to study astronomy from the top of the tower with young ladies. But that matter we shall now regard as a closed issue. The question I wish to put to you is something more personal, something more vital."

Waggles shifted uncomfortably. He stared furtively at the green baize table littered with books and papers, at the figurine of Astarte side by side with a bronze statuette of a many-breasted Goddess of Ephesus, at the shining round lenses of the dean's eyeglasses, which threw back the light from the green-globed reading lamp.

"Waggles," continued the Dean of Amboro, resting his elbows on the arms of his chair and leaning his finger tips meditatively together, "what is love?"

"I beg pardon, sir?" gasped Waggles, recoiling visibly.

"That is a plain question put in plain words: Just what does this word 'love' imply to you?"

Waggles glanced toward the door.

"I—I really don't know, sir!"

"But aren't you in love?"

Waggles' color deepened. He remained silent, although a distinct tendency to edge toward the door did not escape the eyes of the Dean of Amboro.

"Then if you have experienced this most primary of all the instincts, surely you have some ideas about it. And surely, as a man of intelligence—of intelligence considerably above that of the ordinary Amboro undergraduate—you are able to articulate those ideas."

Waggles, shifting from one foot to the other, felt that something was expected of him.

"But it's—it's not a simple thing," he inspiredly protested.

"With that point, Waggles, you stand on perfectly sound ground. Herbert Spencer, in fact, has even ventured to anticipate you there. Cluster-

ing about the physical feeling constituting its nucleus are subsidiary feelings, such as those awakened by beauty of face and figure and those grounded on human attachment, and reverence and self-esteem, together with love of appreciation, of sympathy, of freedom, even of property itself. And all these, under excitation, tend both to interact and unite into that immense aggregation which we so loosely designate as 'romantic love.'"

"Yes, sir," acknowledged the non-committal Waggles.

"But the point is," pursued the man of science behind the green baize table, "just what do we mean by romantic love?"

Waggles, feeling the searching lenses on him like headlights, remained uncomfortably silent.

"What, Waggles, is your opinion on that?" prompted the man of science.

"That's something I've—I've never gone into," was Waggles' altogether inadequate reply.

"Precisely," said the Dean of Am-boro, with dolorous triumph. "And it's something that nobody else seems to want to go into. It's something that science itself has neglected, although Spencer acknowledges that perhaps, on the whole, this phenomenon of falling in love is the most interesting episode in the whole career of the ordinary man and woman. And if men decline to go into the matter, as you put it, how are we ever going to reach the truth about it?"

This question seemed to nonplus the discomfited Waggles.

"What's the good of *trying* to find out the truth about it?" he finally inquired.

"That question, Waggles, is not consistent with the spirit of science. Otherwise, one might ask what's the good of trying to find out the truth about anything!"

The only truth seeming to trouble Waggles at the moment was that a mild and moonlit night of early summer lay beyond those musty deanery walls, and that from the shadowy gloom of the huge maples just south of the tennis courts he could hear the broken sound of music and laughing voices. And not all of those voices, seeing it was commencement week, were the voices of men.

"So what, Waggles, are we going to do about it?" the older man asked, with the same weary tolerance that a nurse might use toward an incorrigibly fretful child.

Waggles, resenting that note of intellectual condescension, looked his tormentor squarely between the eyes.

"*Why not ask the women something about it?*" he demanded, backing out of the door as he spoke. This movement gave his question a not undesired touch of the valetudinary.

The spectacled psychologist at the far side of the reading lamp sighed more heavily than before. For Waggles had hit on the one stumblingblock in the path of all ethnographic success. You simply couldn't ask women about such things. *Questionnaires* on that theme, Macraven had found, were only too sadly impossible.

With still another sigh, he got up from his chair and went to the window. Beyond the shadowy maples, he could hear the lilt and throb of guitars, and the tinkle of mandolins, and rising above the music, now and then, the sound of light and youthful voices. And some of those voices were the voices of young women.

It was the old, the never-ending game. It made Macraven's thoughts go back to his own youth, to other nights of quiet moonlight, when he had leaned from a window in Oxford and heard much the same music and, across the level Magdalen lawns, had listened to much the same light and happy



voices. And still later, in Heidelberg, he had often enough looked out on the same moonlight, on the same odorous beauty of earth and air, on the same unphilosophizing call of youth to youth. And there, too, at times he had been vaguely depressed by the sound of distant laughter and music.

In some way he had always seemed above it, barred off and detached from it. Instead of bending over mandolins, he had bent over microscope slides. And instead of living, he had been busy writing about life. Instead of climbing tower stairs with impressionable young women, after the manner of the redoubtable Waggles, he had struggled to make the name Amboro stand for something in the world of anthropology. But as he leaned out over the narrow stone sill, gazing across the deanery garden, already fragrant with its wealth of hyacinths, and out across the soft green of the campus, pallid in the flat moonlight, and up to the great gray tower that rose so sentinellike above the huddled college roofs, he felt a wayward sense of isolation creeping over him. He was no longer a young man. He was already entered, well entered, upon what his fellow worker in science had called "the plateau of life." Something had faded and passed away, he scarcely knew what.

Yet it was only in fleeting and abstracted moments like this, he knew, that those years of effort crept back to him in any way touched with regret. That lost youth, he tried to tell himself, had not been altogether a youth of unhappiness. Each season had known its accomplishment; each year had marked an advance. He had done what he had set out to do; Amboro had indeed been put on the map of anthropology, and behind him, under the green-shaded light on his sadly littered study table, lay the last pages of the third and final volume of his "Anatomy of Love."

It was, in a way, his life work, or one phase of his life work—and it was finished. The last authority had been consulted, the last reference had been verified. There would be only the proof reading, and that would not begin until the early autumn. No tinkle of guitars, he felt, could ever carry to listening ears music more dulcet than that which had arisen from the quiet scratching of his gold-handled fountain pen as he had slowly written "*Finis*" at the foot of his last page. His college year, with all its avocational drudgery, was over. His work was done. And he was tired.

He turned back to the tower again, vague and blue above him in the soft moonlight. It had always stood there, a discreet and reticent friend to his midnight questionings, always grim and resolute and purposeful, always aloof, unaltering, silent in its aspiration, alone in its bald and unbending strength.

He shut the small diamond-paned windows sharply. Then he drew the curtains and turned a little wearily to his study table.

He had been working too hard, he told himself, as he pushed back the litter of papers before him. He had been living too long on the north side of life. The only tower he had watched had been that cloistral tower of granite. It was a tangible tower, and an enduring one, cold to the touch, somber to the eye. But beyond it, he had always indeterminately felt, there was some far-off sister tower, some frailer thing of softly fashioned ivory, the fragile abode of idleness and dreams, the pinnacle of poetry and longing. That was the tower his overstudious years had left untrodden; and that was the tower he most needed now, he told himself, before it was too late.

His line of thought was interrupted by a sudden knock on the door, and his listlessly authoritative "Come" was answered by the unlooked-for appear-

ance of Taussig, the associate professor of philosophy.

The difference in the two men was marked. The associate professor of philosophy was short and stout. The eyes that shone out from under the shadows of his beetling brows were small, restless, almost furtive in their quickness of movement, had it not been for the settled good nature about the lines of the mouth. His vest was unbuttoned, and his dress, on the whole, tended toward untidiness, being redolent, as always, of strong tobacco.

John Herrin Macraven, on the other hand, was exceptionally tall. His shoulders were marked by that slight roundness which is sometimes known as the scholar's stoop. His face was clean shaven, firm, and clear cut in outline, but given the appearance of being unusually long and ascetic by the high, smooth forehead. The nose, however, was straight and well chiseled, with the large nostril of physical strength, latent or neglected. The marked droop of the mouth corners, which gave the face its occasional aspect of grimness, might be taken as a conscious and deliberate assumption of the authoritative attitude, so kindly were the wide-set hazel eyes, so pensive their abstracted gaze.

"How's love?" asked Taussig, as he dropped into a wide-armed rattan chair. The associate professor of philosophy, Macraven remembered, always asked that question, and Macraven himself always winced at it. There were times, indeed, when he strongly suspected that it was prompted by some possible incongruity between his personality and the paths of his research work.

"With me, it's at last a closed issue," announced the man at the desk.

"On paper?" amended Taussig. There was still a touch of mockery in his tones.

"On paper," solemnly conceded Mac-

raven. "Excepting the fact, of course, that my next four years must go to a study of sexual selection."

Taussig, nursing his pipe bowl, nodded comprehendingly.

"And you feel rather lost, I dare say, with the big job off your hands?"

"Yes, I feel rather lost," acknowledged Macraven.

"You need a rest!" said Taussig judicially.

"I'm going to take one. Doctor Shotwell has asked me up to his place at Cedar Hills. I'm off, the first of the week."

"But I saw somewhere that Shotwell was starting for London, to read that paper of his on 'Reconstructive Anthropogeny?'"

"Precisely; and I've engaged to look after his place while he's away!"

Taussig smoked in silence for a moment or two.

"He has a daughter, if I remember correctly?" said the man in the armchair.

"Yes," answered Macraven. "A mere child." His last memory of Shotwell's offspring was that of an impish and spider-legged youngster who had once upset a bottle of ink over his fourth chapter of "The Mating of Mammals."

"Hm! Do you know how old a child?" asked Taussig.

Macraven did not.

"Ah, that brings me back to young Sewell," said Taussig, elliptically. "It's young Richard Ford Sewell of the fourth year. He's asked me to help him out of that Memorial Hall scrape with Ramsdell."

"But why should we make an exception of young Sewell's case?" said the Dean of Amboro, with a sudden resumption of the academic mien.

"He tells me," confessed Taussig, "that he hopes to be married pretty soon."

"Poor devil!" said Macraven.



His companion smiled, understandingly. Macraven's most widely read book, through what always seemed to its author some inscrutable caprice of public taste, has been his "Woman Retrogressive." From the purely scientific side, it had done little more, of course, than provide a new and startling viewpoint for the world of psychology. But it had marked its creator as a misogynist of uncompromising and self-confessed extremes.

"Sewell isn't a bad sort," said Taussig.

"But what can I do?" demanded Macraven.

"It occurred to me that you might have Miss Appleby speak to her uncle about it." Taussig smiled as he watched the misogynist. "You see, you have so much more influence with her than the rest of us have."

The ridiculousness of such an appeal was too much for Macraven's overtaxed nerves.

"I've told Dodson, my man, to admit Miss Anne Appleby to these rooms on *no consideration!*" he cried.

"But she goes everywhere in Amboro! You can't quarrel with a woman who claims no less than thirteen blood and marriage relationships on the teaching staff alone. And besides all that, she's your own cousin!"

"Pardon me—my stepsister's husband's second cousin!"

"But surely, when she looked after you—I mean brought you that black currant jam last winter, when you had influenza——"

"Again pardon me—Miss Appleby brought that jam against my obvious and expressed desires. Not only that, but when I was quite weak—not altogether myself, I mean—she dictatorially insisted that I should eat it."

"It was remarkably good jam!" said Taussig reminiscently.

The professor of anthropology closed his open inkwell with a tart sudden-

ness that seemed to imply that life could know no greater joy and relief than imprisoning within that same inkwell both Anne Appleby and her jam, for all time.

"Well," said Taussig, rising, "I merely wanted to mention the fact that Miss Appleby would call herself, tomorrow, to talk it over with you."

"Then I shan't see her!" cried Macraven.

"She'll argue you out of *that*," said Taussig, from the doorway, with a wag of his head. "She always does!"

## CHAPTER II.

When the professor of anthropology returned to his rooms from the president's office, early the next day, he found Anne Appleby awaiting him. She was in his big brown leather reading chair, idly twirling her long gloves. On her black waist, just under her little pearl-like chin, reposed a vivid cluster of Roman jonquils.

"Good morning, O King of Knowledge!" said Anne, with her meekest bow, folding her hands.

That was a mocking way of Anne's that always left Macraven more or less afraid of her. It had pleased him mightily, once, to think that Anne had adopted so many of his ideas as to the weaker sex that at his instigation she had eschewed barbaric jewelry and forsworn plumage in her headgear and expressed a horror of adorning herself in the primitive colors. That had been in the early and unsophisticated days of "Woman Retrogressive," when his knowledge of the sex had been merely an empiric and an abstract one. In fact, he had been so carried away by that discipleship that he had rashly proposed marriage to the quite startled Anne, who had promptly refused him, on the ground, she said, that he was an agnostic and that she herself was too young to marry.



*Edmund Frederick*

The professor gazed down at her without restraint, without shame, without even a thought of intrusion. For his impression of the tableau, at the moment, was a purely impersonal and æsthetic one.

That had been six long years earlier in his career, and Anne had seemingly accepted single life with a strange and gentle placidity. Yet, during all that time, he had felt mysteriously apprehensive of this calm-eyed young lady who vacillated, in her relations with him, between that of a brusquely solicitous older sister and that of a mildly chastening young mother. He remembered only too well that it was a habit of Nature to chloroform her victims, as it were, before accomplishing the great cosmic processes, and he had always, since adopting the firm-fixed resolution that the celibate life was the only path through which he might reach his scholastic ends, fought fiercely and stubbornly against the subtly lethal influence that Anne seemed to shed around her.

He noticed, as he stepped to his study table, that one of his empty and neglected vases was filled with a heavy cluster of the same wonderful yellow flower that Anne herself was wearing. For some unfathomable reason a brick-red color slowly crept up to the young professor's high white temples as he sat looking at them.

"They were simply going to waste in my hothouse," explained Anne, with a shrug. "And this room of yours is always so dowdy, you know!"

He looked at the flowers; then he looked at Anne; then he looked back at the flowers again.

"It's very good of you," he said reluctantly.

"It's rather good of you to take them," answered Anne, with her pre-occupied smile, looking about the walls to see if there were dust on his picture frames. "Why didn't you have that second window cut in your sleeping room?" she suddenly demanded.

"The building is not mine," parried Macraven, almost irritably.

"But your lungs are your own," said Anne mildly. Then she sighed.

"There's one thing nice about a woman hater—he always tells you the truth, whether he means to or not."

The professor of anthropology looked at Anne apprehensively. He sometimes found it hard to understand that enigmatic young lady, for all her appearance of brusque straightforwardness. He was about to speak; then he decided that silence was golden.

"You're going away," said Anne, with conviction.

Anne's intuitions, at times, were startling.

"Yes, I want a rest," said Macraven.

"I know it," said Anne simply. She seemed to be struggling with a momentary temptation toward candor. "Couldn't I pack for you?" she demanded. Anne was the type of woman that takes an unreasonable and implacable delight in the exercise of the domestic attributes. She had even once insisted on sewing on buttons for the fellow in mathematics. "Why *couldn't* I pack for you?" she implored.

"You could do it only over Dodson's dead body, I'm afraid," explained Macraven uneasily. He always felt afraid of Anne in that imploring mood. "Dodson is leaving me to-morrow."

"Well, there's *one* thing I want you to do for me," said Anne, suddenly sitting up straight and turning on him the soft artillery of her solemn smile.

"And that is?"

"I want you to be easy on Dickie Sewell."

"If young Sewell has broken the rules of this college, he must suffer accordingly."

"Yes, but supposing it's going to hurt somebody who is very near and dear to you," persisted Anne.

"Good heavens, are *you* in love with young Sewell, too?" demanded Macraven.

"Thanks awfully," said Anne, purring a little mockingly. "I never really knew you felt that way about me." She

grew suddenly sober, with an eloquent little outthrust of her upturned hands. "Instead of being merely just, be generous, this once!"

Macraven tried to explain to her the meaning and import of impersonal Duty.

"But I know he would be grateful," said Anne, inconsequentially. "It would mean so much to him."

The Dean of Amboro smiled a little wearily. It was an old cry, that; it always did mean so much to them, and they were all so ready to be grateful! So many times, year after year, they had come to him for help, and had pleaded their cause and passed out into the world, without so much as a word of gratitude. He did not resent it; he resented only the disillusionment it brought to his own breast.

"There's nothing I can do," he said, a little wearily.

A fleeting look of pity crept into Anne's eyes, at the lines of fatigue on his face. That look in her eyes made him very guarded and watchful.

"That's all I ask, you see," she cried, with another of her sudden changes of tone. "That's all that will be necessary—just to *do nothing*." Then she added, softly: "I've attended to all the rest of the faculty."

He would have laughed, had he been more at his ease. When he looked up again, she had risen and was standing above him with her hand outstretched.

"Good-by," she said. "Have a good rest and a jolly time!"

And before he realized it, she had fluttered out, and the room was empty. As he sat there, deep in thought, with the tips of his long fingers held lightly together, he first tried to recall their talk, and then tried to reframe in his mind her face as she had looked down at him.

Anne Appleby was a woman of twenty-seven, unmarried, and of independent means. An open brow, not

altogether untouched with its mysterious serenities, bore testimony to the full intellectual control of that emotional warmth which the rich, yet softly turned lips only too eloquently confessed. Yet this mouth was both tender and humorous. Her eyes were gray, large, and intelligent. Unscrupulous in her efforts toward the engagement of affection—since with that invincible ally she had long since learned she could best control people—she was still courageous enough to make enemies for the sake of a friend, or to shock friends for the sake of an enemy. There was a tradition in Amboro that either the field captain or the class president of each term for eleven years back had duly, but hopelessly proposed to her, and had, of course, been promptly, yet tenderly rejected.

Not that Anne was a coquette in the ordinary sense of that odious word. It had always seemed to be her sportsmanlike principle to kill only what was needed for camp; she would surrender to no impulse for slaughter for the mere sake of the killing. She was still young enough to talk with her contented victims as a sister might, and yet quite oldish enough to act toward them as a mother should—an elusive and unstable association that seldom tended toward peace of mind in the objects of her keenly impersonal solicitude. Yet Anne, at times, could be the soul of sobriety; she was reserved even to primness; her indiscretions were open ones, and usually due to a mingling of carelessly defiant impulse and a warm-hearted and ever-active domesticity. In fact, so wide were her relationships by blood and marriage, so ready were her sympathies, and so numerous the army of infants named after her—so went the Amboro tradition—that for seven years and more the passing away of some namesake or kindred had kept Anne Appleby in a state of continuous mourning—though

there were those who held that it was all because she thought she looked her best in black.

## CHAPTER III.

Macraven, with his butterfly nets and his microscopes beside him, peered uneasily up and down the lonely little station platform. From a near-by clover field, in full bloom, echoed the call of bobolinks. From somewhere in the remoter distance came the sound of pounding; then a dog barked, and the morning grew silent again. The only figure in sight was that of a much be-whiskered and ferret-eyed workman, placidly squatting beside a row of track lamps, at the far end of the bald little platform.

"Can you tell me if I am right in assuming that this is Cedar Hills?" asked Macraven, weighed down by the loneliness of the place and some wordless sense of impending calamity.

"It be!" responded the lamp cleaner, with a gently forgiving nod toward the station sign, where the name stood in letters a foot high.

"If I am not mistaken, the fruit farm of Doctor Ezra Shotwell is somewhere in this neighborhood?"

"It be!"

"Then could you please tell me about how far away?"

The lamp cleaner sat and studied for a moment or two.

"'Bout four mile!"

The distant sound of hammering broke forth again, and a dog barked dismally once more through the morning quietness. All the world, it seemed to the Dean of Amboro, had fallen asleep. He turned again to his uncommunicative companion.

"Could you tell me the best way of getting there?"

"Be yuh goin' there?"

"I be!" retorted the professor, exasperated.

The old lamp cleaner slowly wheeled

about and pointed to a clump of willows beyond the clover field.

"The Harkins boy is waitin' for yuh there with the Shotwell team, I guess. Scart to death o' the train, he says. Ain't takin' no chances on another run-away!"

Even as he spoke, a team of prancing bays, with heads high and ears forward, emerged from the shadow of the willows. Macraven looked at them with gathering distrust. The youth who was holding the reins could have been little more than twelve or thirteen years of age. The professor promptly decided that if only four miles separated him from the Shotwell farm, he preferred to walk.

"Air yuh the man from Amboro they was lookin' for yisterday?" languidly inquired the lamp cleaner.

"Yesterday?" echoed Macraven, in alarm. "Surely I wired the right date!"

He peered through his pocket notebook with a sigh of distress. His friend viewed him with forbearance modified by compassion, slowly wagging his head up and down.

"She said as yuh might be a little queerlike."

"Who said I'd be 'queerlike'?" demanded the other.

"That gurl o' Shotwell's. She druv through with that team o' bays o' theirs yisterday. Waited a hull hour and a half for the up train. When the train *did* pull in, that team o' hers run away, lickety-split. Smashed a hind spring afore the gurl could git 'em sawed off 'n the wind!"

"Was she hurt?"

"No, but she was *mad*!" He wagged his head again, in silent memory of the scene. She's a high-stepper, that gurl! Then she cooled down and said I was to hev yuh sent over to the farm, if yuh got in when nobody was round—said I was to try and git some little wits in my head—he-he—and look out



for a middle-aged gen'leman with thin legs!"

An inconsequential feeling of irritability crept over the young professor of anthropology. He was, obviously, in the land of the Barbaroi, where worth went unrecognized.

He left instructions for the Harkins boy to carry his traps on to the farm, whither he would follow on foot. A walk of four miles through the fresh country air would brush the cobwebs from his brain and give him a chance to think things out and perhaps swing back to a more cheerful point of view.

He sighed as he resumed his journey down the little winding roadway, between slopes of resinous pine, through orchard lands stippled with light and shade, and along rolling pasture fields threaded with a flashing and tumbling little rivulet; for he had suddenly thought of his telegram and his arrival one day too late. After all, it was just as well that he was getting away from his work. Twice, old Ramsdell, the professor of Greek, had accused him of absently carrying off his gold-headed umbrella. Once, too, he had worn his house coat into the lecture hall—a very comfortable garment that Anne Appleby had quilted and trimmed with scarlet military braid for him. He had been grinding too hard. The quiet life of the country had much to be said in its favor.

For a moment he almost envied Shotwell, his old friend who had been dean of the same "residence," had lectured in the same halls, and had worried along on the same frugal salary. But seven years before, the older man had startled both Amboro and the outer world by the unexpected publication of his romantic novel, "Princess Impossible." He had plaintively enough cried his apologies for it, before his gently smiling academic friends; but in clubs and car seats, in boudoirs and libraries, half a million readers had sighed and wept

over its well-stiffened mush of adventure and its well-candied meringue of sentiment. Little had they imagined, all the while, that the "Shirley Le-grange" of the eleven-editioned romance was Ezra Ingraham Shotwell, M. A., Ph. D., F. A. S. L., author of "Racial Evolution." Yet, ironically enough, the returns from that eleven-editioned frolic in easy-handed eroticism had given the overworked Amboro lecturer a belated chance to cut loose from academic confinement and to take unto himself the many-acred estate where he now toyed with the hybridization of orchard fruits and labored in secluded ease and content on the sixth and last volume of his colossal "Evolutionary Series."

Again the young professor of anthropology sighed, as he came to a stop in the narrow, winding road and gazed absently about him at the murmuring woods, the softly rolling fields, the shadowy thickets from which the birds were singing. That was all he asked for—freedom, such as his old friend had found, to do his own work in his own way. And here, at least, he would be free from all danger of entangling alliances.

It was not that he was so much afraid of women—he prided himself that he knew them too well for that—it was more that he was afraid of his own racial instincts, calling to him so arbitrarily out of the tomb of the past. Nor was he uncertain of what course to choose. When one was wedded to one's profession, one was better off, frankly, without women about. Anne herself had always agreed with him on that—and then she would casually ask, ten minutes later, why he had gone out in the sleet without his rubbers, and if he was eating his meals on time. Or she would intimately demand, as she picked a piece of lint from his carpet, if Dodson was airing the deanery blankets properly. She had even come and

bullied him about that new window and sent a chimney cleaner to the deanery when his grate refused to draw. He had often heard that it was the practical and housewifely sort of woman, from the day of the cave dweller down to that of the auto user, who ensnared men.

As he trudged more blithely along through the quiet and fragrant pine woods, he felt more and more grateful for the uncounted miles that lay between him and Amboro. A relieving sense of emancipation crept over him. It seemed, as he threaded his way deeper and deeper into the solitudes of that tranquil country road, that he was forging farther and farther across the frontier of some newer and freer existence.

Yet his day was not all delight. For as the morning grew older, and the sun mounted higher, he began to regret his caution in the matter of the Harkins boy and the team. As he had feared, his left knee had already begun to trouble him.

He unbuttoned his heat-absorbing black coat, and every now and then fanned himself with his broad-brimmed clerical-looking "wide-awake" hat. Yet he kept stoically on until he came to an alluringly secluded thicket of pine and thorn tree. The country had grown more broken, and faintly, at times, he could hear the sound of running water.

He decided, at the music of that call, to swing aside into the coolness of the woods and rest, if only for a few moments, on one of the fallen logs. He stood there, chewing a dandelion stem, idly debating whether to turn to the right or to the left, when all thought was arrested by a sudden and unexpected sound.

With a strangely quickened interest, he turned in the direction of that unlooked-for interruption—for the sound he had heard across the leafy silences

was unmistakably that of a young girl singing.

#### CHAPTER IV.

As John Herrin Macraven pushed his way through the aisles of dark pines bordering the roadside, he was overtaken by a subtle feeling of migration, an impression that he was passing from a world of realities into one of purely Hesperidean setting. A thick carpeting of pine needles muffled his hurrying steps; the wind sighed continually in the treetops overhead; a bird or two chirped drowsily.

Then came the fuller sound of the human note, the high and clear soprano once more. The young professor, like a man in a dream, made his way from the darker belt of pines to a thicket of wild plum, through which a little stream glimmered and flashed and danced. It was from the heart of this thicket, apparently, that the light-noted Arcadian voice was singing, with all the abandon of an April bird.

As the young man guardedly pushed the tangled plum branches to one side, his startled eyes made out the crystal glimmer of a secluded pool. On the greensward beside this pool knelt a young girl, vigorously toweling a great mass of golden-yellow hair. As it fell and swung over her face, from time to time, she threw back her head with a quick upward motion, to free herself of the engulfing cascade. Her round young arms were bare, and gleamed in the strong sunlight. Her throat, too, was bare, and, cut out against its emerald background, seemed of more than ivory whiteness.

The professor gazed down at her without restraint, without shame, without even a thought of intrusion. He could have flung a dozen classical allusions at her—Aphrodite emerging from the sea, Ariadne among her nymphs, Diana beside the secret pool. For his impression of the tableau, at the mo-

ment, was a purely impersonal and æsthetic one. Then of a sudden the charm was broken.

Whether it was mere accident or some vague and telepathic impression, he was never able to say, but before even the impulse of withdrawal had come to him, as the eyes of the singing girl idly turned about the little woodland coign, they came to a halt at the precise point where the intruding stranger stood.

He thought he heard the sound of a frightened and muffled and strictly human "*Oh, goodness!*" The next moment he saw nothing more than a startled and indignant young woman covering her shoulders with a red-striped Turkish towel. He would have fled, madly, ignominiously, but flight was already too late. Instead, as was his custom in moments of great embarrassment, he coughed gravely, all the while conscious that his face was turning a deeper and deeper color. His mental misery, however, seemed somewhat to reassure and calm the young woman confronting him.

"Hello!"

Her challenge was an audaciously timid one.

"Hello!" responded the professor inadequately.

"Well?" she demanded, more imperiously.

The intruder fumbled with his hat.

"Were you looking for any one?" asked the girl.

"I—I hope you don't mind!" stammered the abashed scholar. "I didn't dream of intruding, you know!" And his scarlet brow plainly bore out the truth of his declaration. He waited for her to speak.

The girl gave vent to a ripple of light and easy laughter. Then she stopped and looked the intruder up and down.

"You're John Herrin Macraven!" she announced, with sudden conviction,

plaiting her hair with deft and twinkling fingers.

The professor bowed gravely.

"And you don't know *me*?" laughed the girl.

The professor confessed that he did not.

"I'm Sybil!" she announced simply.

"Is it possible?" gasped the scholar. Little Sybil, grown almost into a woman, the child he had trotted on his knee and put out of his study for knocking over his insect cases! He gazed at her, from head to foot, and she in turn colored under his prolonged and studious stare.

"Would you mind turning round for a minute?" she asked.

He noticed, for the first time, that she was holding her jacket in her hand. He faced about, tingling again with embarrassment.

"I really forgot!" he stammered.

There was a moment of silence.

"It's all right now," announced the girl placidly. "You can turn back."

"You're—er—quite sure?"

"Yes—it's on!"

The young professor wheeled about, slowly and cautiously.

"And *you* are little Sybil!" he repeated, wagging a contemplative head. "Why, my dear young lady, seven years ago, when you left Amboro, you were nothing more than——"

"I'm nineteen," announced Sybil, with dignity. She was gathering up her comb and brushes from the grass by this time. "Why didn't you come on Monday, as you telegraphed?"

The professor tried to remember; he could only recall that it should have been Tuesday.

"Your telegram said Monday. I waited two hours, in the heat. And the horses ran away and smashed the Gladstone springs!" pursued the practical-minded Sybil.

"Did it?" asked the professor vacuously, thinking of the telegram. Then





"What's the good of science, anyway?" It was Sybil who gave indignant yet indolent expression to this amazing question.

he sighed plaintively. "Quite frequently, of late, I find myself making mistakes of that nature, especially about dates."

"That's what Anne says," the girl announced.

"What *Anne* says?" echoed the other.

"Yes, Anne. She told me you went to Lydia Ramsdell's wedding, the second day after the bride had left for Palm Beach, with black gloves and a bunch of tuberose for the remains!"

The professor, with every sign and token of distress, protested that Anne was always exaggerating things.

"Anne's a dear!" cried the girl, with a touch of reproof in her voice. "Father says she's the finest woman that

ever walked in shoe leather. *She's* found something to do in life. *She's* made herself mean something in this world. *She's* not just an idler, an atom, like me!"

"Atoms, it must be remembered, are matters of vast importance," corrected the man of science.

"But why didn't you ride over with young Harkins?" persisted the girl.

He explained that he had preferred walking, scarcely realizing the distance.

Then Sybil asked him if he wasn't nearly starved to death, and if he liked swimming, and if he had noticed that berry bird on the thorn tree; and while she was saying that she would show him a short cut back to the house, he

was pondering what could ever have given rise to the popular misconception that women were less practical than men.

"I'm not a bit clever, like Anne, you know," Sybil was prattling on, as she stooped to gather an armful of sweet brier.

The professor looked down at the laughing face, the wind-loosened hair, the lithe young figure stooping before him.

"My dear young lady, I grant that intellectual acumen is not a thing to be despised in women, but in the fulfillment of her profoundest biological duties, I fail to comprehend the advantages of mere cleverness alone. If what has been called the modern woman could only remember that this purely factitious mental culture of hers is absolutely subservient to her more glorious and more essential mission of continuing and— But, dear me, dear me, you're far too young to have the slightest inkling of what I was about to say!"

"Oh, no, I'm not!" said Sybil, tying her belt. "I've always felt that—just what you were going to say. It's perfectly true."

The young professor coughed gravely.

"You see, being so much alone up here, I've had to think things out for myself. Then reading father's proofs for him—" She broke off with a laugh. "*Father* says I know too much for my own good. But of course that's all rubbish. Still, I seem to feel things somehow—things that every other woman who ever lived learned and felt, ages and ages ago. I imagine myself Sappho, sometimes—don't laugh!—and sometimes I've the feeling that I'm Joan hearing voices, and sometimes Francesca looking out of lonely towers on a strange world!"

"You—you *have* a wonderful imagination," averred her companion.

"That's what father says," she chattered on. "That's why he lets me be so lazy, and write things nobody will understand, and try to dream things out. But it isn't the verses I care for. It's *life*—it's beautiful ways of living that bring the thought of them to me. That's what I love. It's flowers and singing birds and the afternoon sunlight on soft hills, and the being young and happy and satisfied, and going to bed tired and glad, with so many new things to do and see to-morrow!"

They were crossing an undulating meadow by this time, knee-deep in heavy-scented clover blossoms. The bobolinks overhead were pouring down their liquid notes, and in the flat noonday sunlight all the world seemed lazy and good-natured and carefree. The professor drank in a deep breath of the blossom-scented air.

"I wish you'd teach me the secret," he said humbly, and with slightly heightened color. "I mean, show me how you *can* be so light-hearted, so happy, so in love with living!"

She turned and looked at him, with the ingenuous and confidential gaze of a child. Then she stopped him, with one small sunburned hand on his black coat sleeve, and together they looked about the light-bathed landscape, from east to west. Her face had the solemnity of a youthful seer's.

"Why should it be so hard, in such a beautiful world as this?" inquired the young rhapsodist.

"It shouldn't!" agreed the man of science, yet as he said it, his gaze was not on the world, but on the girl's upturned face and dark-lidded eyes. He wondered, though, if in some way she was not secretly making fun of him.

"One only has to drift, like the butterflies," she crooned softly, as if speaking to herself. "And in the end, you find everything—at the end of the rainbow!" She sighed happily. "I love to dream, don't you? I love to lie and

watch the buds unfold. I love to listen to the sound of water, and hear voices seem to break through the drone. Don't you?"

"Yes, of course," assented the other, "if it's in a dry place."

The girl shook her head sorrowfully.

"No, I know you'd think of bugs!"

"Not with you," essayed the professor courageously.

She checked her laughter and pointed into the rolling lowlands before them.

"There's the house—see? In that clump of maples above the apple trees! And there's father, coming down the west lane in the surrey! Won't it be awful with dad away for a whole month?"

The young professor found himself in no way elated at the sight of that particular house, which had once seemed so dismally distant.

#### CHAPTER V.

"We're to look for puffballs this morning, Sybil and I!" was John Herin Macraven's first tangible thought as he contentedly opened his eyes, early the next day.

"Sybil and I!" he repeated aloud, with even greater content, for he could hear her singing, somewhere down in the garden, stopping now and then to call, in her clear, high soprano, to the dogs.

He flung open the old-fashioned wooden shutters, and blinked out at a tranquil and odorous world steeped in light.

The winelike air of the early summer morning seemed to bring a light and unlooked-for warmth into his blood. He was going to walk in the fields with Sybil, for Terence, the gardener, had reported that already the warm June rains had brought out an early crop of puffballs, down in the old sheep pasture. And Sybil was waiting for him, singing in the garden be-

low. He wondered, before the old-fashioned cheval mirror of the Shotwell guest chamber, how he had ever fallen into the habit of wearing nothing but solemn black.

"Oh, don't bother about *hats*!" cried Sybil, as he emerged with his sober-hued wide-awake discreetly covering that spot at the top of his head where the hair was already a trifle thin. "Sunlight's good for it," she explained, noticing him run his fingers dubiously through his thin locks.

One glance at her own rippling wealth of yellow put an end to his indecision. He dropped the sober wide-awake on the veranda steps and turned his high white brow after Sybil and the romping dogs.

"Oh, I know what we must do!" cried Sybil, at the end of the first meadow, as she caught her wondering companion by the arm and led him into a little sumac grove.

"And what is that?" he asked, looking about.

"Stand still!" commanded Sybil.

"But why?"

"Because, sir, you are about to be initiated into the Sacred Order of the Children of the Morning Sun, and duly and fitly anointed!"

She reached out a quick hand, as she spoke, and gave the sumac branches above his head a vigorous shake. The result was a heavy and a totally unexpected shower of dewdrops. The professor found that it had left his hair quite damp, but, for Sybil's sake, he refrained from taking out his pocket handkerchief and mopping his head.

"Isn't it lovely?" cried the girl, as she shook the glistening drops down on her upturned face. The little beads of liquid spattered on her eyelids, glistened across her cheek, lost themselves in her glimmering hair. "Shake some on me."

He did as she asked, watching her upturned profile cut out against the

gloom of the thicket, her golden hair, caught up so loosely from her brow, glinting and shimmering in the subdued half light, her lips parted in a smile that made him think of a young devotee of Aphrodite in some old Adonian festival. And through it all she was so unconscious, so free from pose and restraint, so frank and untrammelled a creature of the fields, that when, a few minutes later, they came to the meadow rail fence, he unconsciously stopped to help her. This he did by reaching out his arms, without either hesitation or embarrassment, and catching her as she stood poised on the top rail.

Now, when a taciturn young scholar helps a young woman over a snake fence, sobriety shudders on her throne; for as he caught her, and felt the clasp of her girlish arms and the warm and fragrant weight of her light body, he so far sent the eternal proprieties to kennel as to wonder just how many similar obstacles might lie in their path that morning.

"Isn't it fun?" cried Sybil, with her childish and innocent bubble of delight. She shook herself free, and tossed back her hair. The young professor suddenly joined in her laughter with great vigor. It was glorious, this emancipated and careless life in the country, he decided. It was the very thing he needed!

So side by side they loitered on through the short-grassed sheep pasture, glistening with the morning dew, fresh and green and virginal.

Suddenly she screamed and darted away from him. He thought, at first, that it was because of some infuriated farm animal. But it was merely that she had caught sight of the first puffball, the first young devil's snuffbox, gleaming like a little ball of ivory against the intense green of the pasture.

He took it from her and glanced over it with critical eyes. There had been

a time, when he had first taken up his exhaustive study of mildew and food mold, when he had somewhat prided himself on his knowledge of fungi.

"Ah, yes! We used to call these smokeballs, when I was a boy. But I never understood that they were edible."

"Edible!" cried Sybil. "Why, when they're sliced and fried in butter, the way Hannah does them, they're better than French omelet! They're delicious!"

She blew a kiss from her puckered lips, with the tips of her fingers, in gustatory appreciation of that imagined dish, and the professor made a hurried mental note of the movement, believing that he detected, in that Latin gesture, so exotic to the Anglo-Saxon, a point of the keenest ethnological interest. Then he gave his attention once more to the puffball, breaking open the peridium and holding the crushed gleba close to his squinting eyes.

"Why—how dare you?" cried Sybil.

"I beg pardon?" said the scientist, still squinting at his specimen.

"How dare you?" repeated Sybil.

The young scholar looked into her half-angry eyes with astonishment.

"Do you know what you've done?" she demanded, with uplifted eyebrows.

"Why, nothing very bad, I hope!" protested the offender.

"That thing you've smashed up is good to eat! I wanted that for breakfast! We may not get another one that size, in the whole field!" She was glowering up at him from under angry brows.

"Oh, I say, we'll surely find more!" he protested.

"Oh, yes, we may find more! But it makes me angry to see a man spoiling a thing just to find out how it's made! And I firmly believe that any one who would do that with his own breakfast would do it with—with his own baby!

I hate that scientific way of probing into everything—and spoiling it!”

He was looking at the crushed and discolored delicacy, penitently.

“Did you ever know,” he ventured, “that puffballs, when dried, are used for the stanching of blood?”

Yes, that was one of the few things she did know; it was the only use ignorant country people had for them.

“Well, supposing I find you a hatful of fresh ones—won’t that be enough to stanch this—er—this flow of indignation?”

She found it hard to resist his conciliating and almost boyish smile.

“I was mean-tempered, wasn’t I?” she conceded meditatively.

“Frightful!”

And they laughed together.

That wave of laughter carried away with it the last of her resentment. But she looked at him, from time to time, with a studious and impersonal glance that might have spelled danger to a mind of more suspicious bent. All he saw, however, was a guileless and repentant young woman in a pink frock, scanning the undulating pasture field for signs of edible fungi. When, a few minutes later, they stumbled upon a colony of puffballs, the volatile Sybil joyously held up her skirt and filled it with the delicate little grayish-white globes.

In such fashion they made their way from one end of the pasture to the other, laughing, loitering, chattering, oblivious of time and space. From the sheep pasture they crossed into the cool and shadowy old apple orchard. As he helped the laughing girl down from the fence top, the young professor again tingled with that embarrassing and indescribable thrill, at the clasp of her warm hand in his.

Something in his contemplative and uncompromising solemnity of mien, as they started on their way once more, prompted the girl to a sudden chal-

lenge. The morning had grown hot and quiet, but under the shadowy trees the dew was still cool and thick on the short grass.

“Let’s go barefoot!” she cried audaciously.

Her companion drew back, a little doubting his own ears.

“Let’s go barefoot!” repeated Sybil. “Oh, I say!” It was the professor’s customary phrase of protest.

“Just feel this grass—how soft and cool it is!” pleaded the beguiler. “It’s such fun—I always do, anyway!”

She was actually on an apple-tree stump, unlacing her low shoes.

“But, my dear young lady, won’t you take your death of cold?”

“I know I shan’t,” said the girl, with just the slightest tinge of scorn in her tones. “I do it always, mornings like this.”

“It’s well enough for children, I grant,” began the professor temporizingly.

“Of course old folks have to be careful,” admitted Sybil blandly, tucking her stockings into the toes of her empty shoes.

He looked at her, looked at his wide-toed boots, looked at the orchard grass, and with a very melancholy sigh sat down on the turf and, with his back to her, deliberately and defiantly removed his shoes.

Once on his feet again, he turned and faced the laughing Sybil, a little indignantly, a little shamefacedly.

“Isn’t it good?”

She had tied the laces of her tiny shoes together and slipped them over her head, so that they hung free at her waist.

“Now try running,” she advised. “It toughens ’em.”

John Herrin Macraven stood and gazed at the twinkle of her white feet as they sped over the dew-drenched grass. Then he surrendered himself to



her mood of carefree abandon and ran after her.

It was not so delicious, perhaps, as he had apprehended. He assumed the trouble to lie in the fact that the soles of his feet were still exceptionally tender. But he betrayed no sign of what that flight was costing him. Only the initiated might have judged, from the deliberate and judicious way in which each foot came in contact with the short stubble, that he was still a slave of civilization and its pampering shoe leather. But now that the plunge had been made, he was determined to go on to the bitter end.

Far ahead, through the shadowy trees, he could hear Sybil's lightly re-echoed cry. It was like the call of a dryad through dim Sicilian groves, he told himself. He caught sight of her, flushed and panting, leaning against the lane fence, waiting for him. His feet were getting used to the stubble; the rapid motion sent the blood coursing through his veins. There was, after all, something magically rejuvenating in such free-and-easy outdoor exercise. So he called out gayly, as he approached her:

"Why, you are Diana herself!"

"Fine!" cried the laughing girl.

"And I am Endymion, and this apple orchard is the Ephesian forest," he went on exultantly.

The answer that greeted his ears was an unexpected one:

"But I'm extremely hungry and it's twenty minutes past nine! Hannah, I might add, has been keeping breakfast waiting for an hour and a quarter!"

It was the guttural and indignant voice of Sybil's father.

The professor of anthropology came to a standstill. The feeling of abandoned hilarity ebbed out of his hot body; the carefree smile withered from his startled face. He looked down at his feet as one might look, on awakening from a dream, at some familiar and

homely object of household furniture, linking consciousness with its placid and everyday existence. Then he swallowed hard, once or twice, and looked up at his old-time colleague of the gray walls of Amboro.

The eyes of the two men met, across that narrow country lane, but no words passed between them. The look of each was enough.

## CHAPTER VI.

"What's the good of science, anyway?"

It was Sybil who gave indignant yet indolent expression to this amazing question, comfortably propped up against an old elm, with an armful of field flowers scattered about her.

They had idled the forenoon away together, and the young professor, as he lay sprawled out on the grass beside her, was far from unhappy. He had been gazing at her lazily, but studiously, with what she had contemptuously called his "scientific look."

"I know what you're doing," she had said. "You're trying to analyze me and give me a Latin name as long as your arm—the same as you do with those bugs of yours!"

She was often disconcertingly correct in her blind and thoughtless intuitions.

"What a lovely bug you'd make, just to study month after month!"

The professor, obviously, was getting on a bit. Nature and the force of habit, however, promptly reasserted themselves, for at a retrospective view of his audacity, he blushed.

"Yes," Sybil had gone on, astutely unobserving, "to be pinned down and torn to pieces, wing by wing, and to struggle to writhe away, while you sat and speculated as to the theory of nervous derivation!"

And it was then that she had flung out her interrogation as to the final good of all science.

"Oh, I know," she went on, a little combatively and yet a little plaintively, "you imagine I live in a world of illusions. But, after all, my world's as real as yours. You think I'm only posing when I tell you that the flowers talk to me in the language of perfumes, and that I can learn things from the sound of water and the robins and the wind. But there's really some terribly old wisdom in the whisper of pine trees, and— Are you listening?" she cried suddenly.

The young professor was listening, but more to the lilting and soothing melody of her voice than to the words she was so heatedly uttering. He had just discovered that the curve of her lips was the loveliest curve in all nature.

"But you come and drag me to earth with that ferrety microscope-slide look of yours! You reach out and prick every bubble of my make-believe with that University of Amboro voice of yours, demanding the why and the wherefore of everything. You're forever trying to turn all the beautiful mysteries of nature into bald and sordid facts. Facts—I hate them! You probe and analyze and dissect, but you've never once surrendered yourself to one great current of feeling, and let it carry you away, softly, happily——"

"Oh, I say!" The young professor of anthropology was looking about him, visibly alarmed, when his eyes chanced to rest upon a small red ant crawling across the hem of her skirt. He followed the movements of the insect intently.

"Pardon me," he said, "but see, this is the well-known Pharaoh's ant, the tiny *Monomorium pharaonis*!"

"Is it?" said Sybil, with uplifted eyebrows.

"Yes, one of those little insects whose community life is as complex and highly organized as that of man himself!"

"Indeed!" said Sybil, with the ghost of a sigh.

"There are the winged males, and the females, winged until they mate, and the wingless and unhappy neuters——"

"Neuters, did you say?"

"Yes, neuters, who slave their dull lives out, toiling and laboring and dying for the hive."

"Very much like the human plan, after all, isn't it?" commented Sybil absently.

The professor looked at her blankly, oppressed by the feeling that she was in some way making fun of him. But her light and careless laugh, as she looked back into his questioning eyes, persuaded him that he was quite wrong in this suspicion.

"Well?" she asked.

He still looked at her.

"Oh, please don't try to study me with such contemplative wisdom! I'm not worth the trouble—I'm only a moment's splash of sunlight on the gray walls of your life. I'm only a foolish child leaning out of the windows of idleness!"

"You're a poet, my dear!" said the professor, with feeling.

"You'd like it better if Anne were here!" suddenly complained the girl, with a quick side glance at her companion.

"Would I?" retorted the professor tartly.

"You know you would!" mourned the unhappy spirit at his side.

"But Anne isn't here!" he was human enough to observe. He wondered why it was that all the perfect moments of life were marred by some incongruously trifling word or touch.

"But she's coming," said Sybil.

If Anne had been an angry hornet, ready for attack, the professor could not have looked more dismayed.

"Anne coming here?" he echoed.

"Father has asked her to—to look after us!"



She threw him a handful of the ripest and blackest and biggest on the tree, but he refused to touch them.

She leaned nearer to him, pregnantly, as she spoke, and they looked into each other's eyes for a moment or two of unbroken silence. Then the mounting color slowly crept up to the very hat brim of the man of science. Sybil denied herself the luxury of laughter; she only continued to shake her head mournfully.

"You and Anne have so much in common," she went on, with her soft

bitterness. "You are really both so much alike, so used to the same way of looking at things, and——"

"I can't say that I ever regarded Anne as being the possessor of what by any stretch of the imagination might be called the scientific mind!" retorted the man.

"I won't have you criticize Anne!" demurred Sybil.

"But why shouldn't I criticize Anne?"

"Because—oh, because you and Anne must really be so much to each other!"

"Must be?" asked the indignant and heartless one. "I can't recall being either conscious of any particular affinity or devastated by any particular subjugation!"

"Then you're not in love?" cried Sybil, and her involuntary look of relief was so flattering that the professor found it no easy thing to keep from falling headlong into her petal-sprinkled fem-

inine pit of open confession. But he had walked with science for twelve long years, and it had taught him discretion. He had the good luck to keep silence.

"But when two people are practically engaged?" said Sybil, returning to the attack.

"I am not and never was engaged to Anne!" declared the professor, with unexpected acerbity. He had been



going to add, "And never will be!" but again he had the good luck to be silent.

"But you have an understanding, of course?" murmured the girl gently. "Or it's understood there's an understanding?"

The professor was on the point of declaring that he believed Anne to have some understanding on the matter, and some very distinct understanding. Still again, however, that admonishing inner voice prompted him to keep his own counsel.

He flung a pebble moodily into the brook at their feet and then looked at Sybil. Sybil only shook out her skirts and announced that it would be luncheon time before they could get back to the house. He noticed a new and more mature look, he thought, in her contemplative eyes.

He rose to his feet, rubbing his left knee for a moment or two—he was still painfully absent-minded about sitting on damp grass—and caught up with his silent companion. He felt that from that moment forth they stood in a new relation to each other. The note of artlessness had given way to a feeling of impending conflict, of some silent, yet solemn combat between elemental and embattled sex. And he noticed that the newer Sybil who walked at his side did not go home by way of the fields, where there would have been three fences to climb, but decorously by way of the lane

#### CHAPTER VII.

John Herrin Macraven, for the first time since his flight from Amboro, felt morose and depressed and nervous. He sat up in bed and carefully felt his pulse, but could detect no symptom of physiological disturbance.

He knew it was something of the mind, and not of the body, for half an hour later, when Sybil caroled her morning call from the garden under his

window, he resentfully slammed the heavy wooden shutters.

"Hoity-toity!" he heard the surprised girl cry aloud, at that unexpected sign of temper. But she went on singing, as artlessly as ever.

The shutters of the second window were straightway slammed to, with even greater vigor.

"Brute!" said the girl, and there was no more singing.

It was not until he had emerged from his shadowy room into the clear white sunlight of the early morning, and was pacing the deserted verandas and the lonely garden parterre, that the enormity of his offense, the sheer barbarity of his mood, came home to him. The more he cogitated over his pettishness, his miserable moment of pique, the more he resolved to make amends. His inward distress was so great, in fact, that the mere thought of breakfast suddenly became a mockery. He started off, without his hat, in resolute search of Sybil.

He wandered off down through the orchard, listlessly. From there he went on to the east meadow, and then out past the grape rows to the walnut grove. The very fields seemed empty and unattractive. The birds were singing, but he did not hear them. The flowers were as fresh and abundant about him as ever, the skies were as blue above him, but he did not observe them.

He stopped in the lane before a glowing cluster of brier roses, and an inspiration came to him. What could be more significant than a peace offering of these pale and delicate blossoms, still wet and sparkling with the morning's dew? So with great care and industry he cut and gathered an armful of the pink flowers, knotting the thorny stems together with a slender willow wand. Then he crept furtively back through the garden, skirting the front of the house and slipping in between

hedges and bushes until he came under an open window that he knew to be Sybil's. As he listened, smiling at the thought of his happy subterfuge, he could even catch the sound of her soft movements about the room above him. He looked carefully around, to see that he was unobserved. Then he crept still closer to the window and flung the great armful of flowers into the room. If she acknowledged the gift, he would know that he was forgiven, that his ungraciousness of the past was forgotten.

Then he fell back quickly, for the voice that he heard was not the light and silvery voice of Sybil, but the measured tones of her father, giving utterance to sudden and easily discernible annoyance.

"I'd be vastly obliged, Sybil, if you'd shake the water out of this rubbish before flinging it into my trunkful of manuscripts!"

The young professor drew back. He would have turned and fled, incontinently, but it was already too late. His old-time colleague was looking down at him, with wide and astounded eyes, from the square of the open window.

"What in the name of—of science do you mean, Macraven, by slinging these confounded rosebushes at me?" And he held up before the abashed peace-maker the armful of brier roses so carefully tied with the willow wand.

The younger man continued to gaze absently at his fingers, filled with minute thorns.

"I assume this floral contribution was intended for me?"

"Er—yes, of course! I—I thought that—"

The older man, still puzzled and impatient, waited for him to proceed.

"I take it they were intended rather to cheer me on my journey than for any immediate botanical examination?" mildly inquired Doctor Shotwell, turning over the huge nosegay.

"Yes—that's it!" agreed the man beneath the window, mopping his brow.

He waited for something further to be said before beating a retreat. As no word came from the window, he turned about, thrust his hands deep in his trousers pockets, and with melancholy aimlessness and the hollow mockery of a whistle, wandered off into the garden. Once out of sight of the house, however, his entire demeanor changed. He clenched his jaw and, smiting the hollow of his left hand with the tightly closed fingers of his right, he emitted one audible and eloquent monosyllable of disgust.

Macraven had once looked forward with a vague dread and uneasiness to the hour of Doctor Shotwell's departure. When that hour actually arrived, however, the younger man, with still some shred of his old-time and innate scrupulosity of thought and deed, felt sadly disturbed at his absence of regret. There were reasons for this, he suspected, but those reasons were of such a nature that he did not care to drag them into the light. Life was short, he told himself, and whatever it cost, he was going to have his day. And as he repeated that ancient and hedonistic phrase, he began to gaze absently about the countryside, as if in search of something he could not clearly define.

It was Terence, the gardener, back from the railway station, who told the professor that Sybil would be found in the strawberry patch.

The disconsolate scientist cleared the orchard fence at one lithe bound, crossed a field of clover with long strides, and caught sight of Sybil in the sun-bathed distance, a soft splash of pink against the dark green of the strawberry leaves. She was kneeling between the wide rows, and the broad milk pan into which she was putting the fruit shimmered with the refracted sunlight.

He waved to her blithely from the fence top, and then as blithely called to her. She seemed neither to see nor to hear him, so engrossed was she in her berry picking. He came to a stop within six feet of where she knelt. He remembered then that she had been crying, that a paroxysm of weeping had shaken her slender body as she had clung to her father and said good-by to him. Even while inwardly remarking that tears seemed to be the final sedative in the feminine pharmacopœia, the younger man of science had instinctively backed away from that scene, not a little affected by the sudden discovery of some deeper current of feeling beyond the rippling shallows of adolescent light-heartedness.

Yet already her tears were forgotten, it seemed, as she half turned and studied the silent figure in black with covert side glances from under the wide rim of her pink sunbonnet.

"Good morning!" she said at last, quite meekly.

"Good morning, Miss Sybil," returned the humbled man of learning.

Sybil, looking up from under the brim of her sunbonnet, saw that his ill temper was as much a thing of the past as her own tears. So she turned to him, with a sudden little outthrust of her berry-stained hand.

"I'm sorry!" she said.

Something in the wistfulness of her glance, in the plaintiveness of her voice, smote him to the heart.

"Don't!" he implored, with an involuntary and quite ridiculous swallowing motion of the throat, as if he had discovered a gland that did not belong there.

Sybil looked on her work and saw that it was good.

"Aren't you sorry, too?" she asked, as she picked a casual berry or two.

The young professor got down on his knees beside her. He poked about under the dark-green leaves, both as an

excuse for the attitude and as an effort to cover his sudden confusion.

"Not the green ones, please!" said Sybil softly, giving him her eyes.

He took her hand, her sun-browned, timorous little hand, and held it in his.

"I am sorry!" he said, with a gulp. And then, as if he had just realized the terrible dimensions of his outrage, he dropped the hand and fell to picking strawberries, grimly and feverishly.

Sybil sighed. Then she sat up and, crushing a great overripe scarlet berry between her scarlet lips, studied her companion's solemn face.

"How could you?" she reproved mournfully. "You—you might have been kind to me—until Anne came, at least!"

He began to look very miserable, and very guilty. He wondered to which that reproof applied—to the slamming of a wooden shutter or to the holding of a berry-stained hand.

"It's so— Why, I'm blushing!" said Sybil.

The young scientist looked so long for the blush that she had nothing to do but hang her head before the directness of his gaze.

"I wonder why it was?" she asked dreamily, toying with a strawberry leaf.

"You wonder why you blush?" interrogated the professor.

Sybil nodded her head and moved the heaping milk pan farther down the row.

"Why, a blush is nothing more than a sudden suffusion of the facial veins due to momentary paralysis of the vaso-constrictor nerves. Personally, I reject Darwin's theory that a person who thinks, for instance, others are looking at her directs her attention to her own face, resulting in a flow of blood toward that part."

"Oh!" said Sybil.

"My own theory of this most interesting of all organic and functional

manifestations which accompany the simple emotions is that the blush is a vestigial remnant of the childhood of our race. I mean, that this woman's blush of yours is inherited from the twilight of time, when woman was the hunted and man the hunter——"

"But isn't that the way it still is?" interrupted the girl gently.

"Of course, my dear, of course," pursued the man of science. "But as I was about to explain, this blush of yours is an echo of the time when to be admired or complimented was a sign of danger. It is a whisper to you from your ancestors. Primitive woman knew that the expressed approbation of the male meant prompt struggle or flight for her, more expenditure of energy, more heart action. And the heart, which is only a muscle, acquired the habit, as it were, and has not been able to shake it off. Do you follow me?"

Sybil, eating a strawberry, nodded.

"Is the heart only a muscle?" she asked dreamily. She ate another strawberry meditatively. "Perhaps that's why it can get so tired and ache so sometimes!"

The professor tried not to show his impatience at this intrusion of sentiment into the cold white light of science.

"For example," he continued, facing her with gently tapping index fingers, "here are you and I, alone in this vast field. You comprehend that we are no longer pagan, that civilization has laid its duties and obligations on me, that you are in no danger whatever of—of unseemly advances."

Sybil gazed at him solemnly, round-eyed and attentive, nodding her head.

"You know all this—the personal woman in you does—yet the natural, the representative woman in you still blushes. That is to say, Nature still flashes her semaphoric danger signal, although for centuries and centuries not

a car wheel of emergency has moved along that track, so to speak!"

"Isn't that interesting?" said Sybil, her utterance a little thick with a half-eaten strawberry. "And, after all, there isn't the slightest danger, is there?"

Stoutly and decisively the young professor assured her that there was not, and Sybil suddenly flung away a strawberry that proved to be bitter and over-ripe. Then she rose to her feet.

"I'm nearly starved, and there's Hannah ringing the lunch bell for the second time. And we're going to have strawberry shortcake!"

The man of science heard the sound of the distant bell tinkling musically across the waving fields. There seemed something unspeakably pleasant in the sound.

Side by side they made their way toward the lane. At the fence Sybil turned to him.

"Will you help me over?" she asked demurely.

He went first. Then he took the pan of berries. Then he turned back for the waiting girl. As he reached up for her groping hands, the lightly balanced figure in pink swayed forward. He caught her, and her roselike raiment seemed to envelop him in a sudden odorous cloud of color, as a shower of rose leaves might muffle and hide away some solemn and age-worn tablet of an earlier century.

## CHAPTER VIII.

John Herrin Macraven came down to breakfast in his new flannels. As he had feared, it was an extremely ill-fitting suit, much too loose in the shoulders and much too long in the legs. His new neckties, too—he had sent for colored ones—were of far too vivid and flaming a crimson to blend readily with his scholastic sobriety of taste. But Sybil, before whom, with intent and malice aforethought, he suddenly pre-

sented himself, clasped her hands in open and unmistakable delight.

"And isn't it funny?" she said, tucking away a letter she had been reading, "*Anne* says she has just given up wearing mourning herself."

The young professor tried to imagine Anne in anything but black. It was as hard as trying to imagine Sybil in anything but pink and white and blue. Then he felt the large white pearl buttons on his coat and adjusted his gayly tinted tie. After all, there *was* something rejuvenating in this marching with the young.

"And Anne will be here in two days more!" said Sybil thoughtfully, across the coffee cups.

Five days had already slipped past, and Macraven demanded of an unanswering heaven and earth just where they had gone. One morning, he knew, they had walked to the woods, for the veranda-box ferns. Once they had gathered wild strawberries along the river bank, and twice they had gone fishing. There had, too, been one long day of steady rain, through which the professor had read in the silent old crimson-curtained library. He had almost welcomed that day indoors, but after half an hour with her book, Sybil had called it stupid, and declared that reading made her sleepy. Then she had yawned and gone to the window, and yawned again, and turned still again toward the man reading in the faded armchair. And the young professor had been so deep in his volume that she had left him there alone, for an hour or more, before he had discovered the fact. After all, she was so young and light and capricious! He could not expect her to be like—well, like Anne, for instance. He would have been able to talk things over with Anne, point by point; she had the knack of giving him ideas. But Anne, of course, was solid prose. She did not fit in with a holiday mood. She did not throb and pulse

with the light meter of poetry, as did Sybil.

To-day, he remembered, he was to gather pond lilies with Sybil.

To gather pond lilies! And far off in the world vast issues were impending, and great problems were solving, and feverish hands were clutching at some new torch of truth, while he would be paddling about in a green row-boat. He smiled a little at the Arcadian simplicity of the thought. Yet why should gathering pond lilies not be as important as the building of empires or the elucidation of a new element! He was not so narrow and musty as he had been, he told himself, and open air and exercise and freedom from worry and light and engaging company—were these not all excellent stimuli?

It was a warm and brooding day of early summer. The sky was a high-arched dome of pulsating turquoise. The trees were full-leaved and motionless. The blossom was maturing into the young fruit; the mother wing fluttering about the crowded nest. A touch of maturity after adolescence, a feeling in all nature for the more sober prose after the wilder vernal poetry, seemed to fill the warming earth.

A vague sense of something impending and climactic took possession of the young professor of anthropology as he walked beside the silent and brooding Sybil down through the orchard and the second meadow to the river where the boat was moored. It was Nature asking no longer mere dream and rhapsody, but demanding achievement and surrender. And it tended, in some way, to make the young scholar rather silent, and secretly uncomfortable.

"What makes you so solemn looking?" demanded Sybil.

"I was thinking how lovely you look in that white muslin dress," he equivocated airily. He felt that he had achieved a highly creditable stroke, for





he was delivered of the open compliment without even a blush.

But his triumph was short-lived.

"That sounds mushy, and just, like Dickie!" declared Sybil, with a little lip curl of disdain, resenting some tacit note of condescension in his tone. "And besides, it's not muslin; it's dimity."

"And who is Dickie?" demanded her companion, raising his voice a little mockingly on the diminutive, feeling something familiar in the sound of the name. He felt that he would strongly dislike this young gentleman of the diminutive name.

"Oh, you'll find out!" temporized Sybil. She walked on with knitted brows for a few moments; then she stopped and placed her hand on the other's arm. "You won't mind if I tell you something?" she began hesitatingly. "It's—it's something you must always keep a secret."

The young professor promised, and waited expectantly.

"Dickie is Richard—Richard Ford Sewell! I've coaxed Anne to bring him up with her for a couple of weeks. It's so poky, you know!"

Richard Ford Sewell, the philanthropist, the idler, the drone of Amboro!

"Anne thought it would be nice," murmured the humble Sybil.

"But why?" demanded the other.

"Why, for company!"

"But company for whom—for Anne, do you mean?" He hated mysteries, and he was beginning to get impatient over it all.

Sybil swallowed hard, as if struggling to keep back some untimely flood either of tears or laughter, he could not tell which.

"Yes, for Anne," she answered.

"Oh," he said, with a look of relief.

It was his turn to walk on with knitted brows. He was recalling

Sewell is the sort of chap for Anne to be going about with! As I remember him, he's a cheeky——"

"He is," agreed Sybil. "The cheekiest alive!"

"Do you mean he's ever cheeky to—to you?" demanded her guardian.

"Always!" declared Sybil.

Something in her tone seemed to imply that this "cheek" was not so objectionable as one might imagine. The young professor even stopped to picture a scene in which he himself might be winningly impudent. His imagination, browsing over the wide range of possibilities, led him far astray, and



"There, I've got it!" he exclaimed in triumph.

numerous matters pertaining to Master Richard Ford Sewell of Amboro.

"But look here!" he broke out suddenly. "I don't think this young

Sybil, once cleared of her confession, made it a point that his thoughts should not return to that earlier topic.

"That's why I like you so much," she

said, with a sudden deeper note of seriousness, and he noticed, for the first time, that her hand was resting on his arm, confidently. "I like you because I know you—you would never try to be cheeky."

He fidgeted a little, not knowing whether to be glad or miserable.

"I was afraid you thought I was, a bit," he murmured.

"Oh, never!" she assured him, trustfully picking a thread from the lapel of his coat. The light fingers, still resting on his arm, seemed to send a genial warmth from his elbow up through all his six feet of sentinel guardianship.

"That's why I've always believed in bashful men," she went on. "You know you're fearfully bashful!"

"Oh, I say!" he demurred contentedly.

"But I mean it," she continued. "Anne says so, too. I remember her saying that when a grown man is bashful, it shows he's still a boy at heart. Who ever heard of a criminal blushing, or a roué stammering, she used to ask. The man who is bashful is still sensitive, still has all the finer feelings. He can't be old and worn out and tired of it all. And women always like a man who's new at things—they like to lead and teach him, you know; and they can do it without being afraid, with the really bashful man. For there's always hope for the man who blushes!"

She was not such a child, after all, this wisp of worldly-wise womanhood in her dainty gown. Timeless intuitions, he felt, echoed out of her careless laughter; the wisdom of the ages slept entombed in her young bosom. He had been too unguarded and given to impulse with her. She had seemed so natural and ingenuous, he had thought that he had been merely responding to candor with candor.

"But we've had enough of all this

solemn talking," she went on. "And just above the bend of the river, there, is father's row of black Tartarian cherries. I saw Terence making a scarecrow yesterday to keep the robins away, so that must mean they're fit to eat!"

She clapped her hands with delight, under the widespread cherry boughs, as she peered upward and saw the purplish-black glow of the ripened fruit.

"I love them!" she cried, ecstatically, and he saw, with startled eyes, that she was no longer the woman, but a child again. "Don't you?"

He acknowledged that he did.

"We'll have to climb for 'em!" she said, throwing off her light coat and flinging back her loosened hair.

"Not for me, thank you!" said the professor, with great dignity. This sort of thing must have its limits, painful as it might be to point them out to her.

"Pooh!" said Sybil, unperturbed. "You take that tree, and I'll take this one!"

"I'd prefer not," said the other, backing away.

"Don't be a poke!" said Sybil. "I've done this since I was ten years old! And if you've never eaten cherries off the tree, you don't know what living is."

The young professor still backed away, doggedly, for already she was clambering up among the lower branches of a near-by tree. He could hear her movements amid the screening foliage. Then he became aware that she was shooting cherry pits at him.

He waited patiently, indignantly, wrathfully, but still she ate. She threw him a handful of the ripest and blackest and biggest on the tree, but he refused to touch them. He would have taken his departure in high dudgeon, only, before he was aware of it, she had clambered down through the thick leafage, swung for a moment from a



lower bough that drooped with her weight, and then dropped lightly to the ground.

Her hair was tumbled and blown across her face, her mouth was stained with cherry juice, and an audacious and reckless light shone from her eyes.

"Shocked?" she asked, tying back her hair.

He did not answer.

His sternness seemed to frighten her. That had been his intention. Still again, a change swept across her face. She came over to him, slowly, penitently, and once more he saw in her not the child, but the woman, intuitive, adroit, embattled, a mysterious something to be feared and opposed and combated. Yet what was there to be afraid of, he asked himself—with only leaves and silence, sunlight and water, and a hoydenish tomboy of a girl, near him?

"You're not angry, are you?" the solemn tomboy was asking, almost against his shoulder.

Instinctively, automatically, involuntarily, his arms went out, and in another moment would have caught and held her, had not the goddess of the lonely heights of science benignantly stooped to him in his moment of need. Tangled in Sybil's hair he caught sight of a gypsy-moth cocoon. It was the *Ocneria dispar*, he remembered, and an excellent specimen.

It was only a moment's pause, but in that moment the charm was broken, the spell had withered. A consciousness of conspiracy against his freedom, his ego, his sex, crept through him. His arms dropped to his sides; he fell back before her threatening touch.

"Let's—let's go for the boat!" he cried with a gasp, mopping his forehead.

"Very well," answered Sybil, quietly, meditatively, as she stooped for her jacket.

She caught up with him and went

along at his side, and as she did so, she moistened her cherry-stained lips. It was a movement strangely like that of a young tigress that had fallen upon its first taste of blood, and then had been denied its second.

## CHAPTER IX.

It was not a wide and lordly river, but as the silent man and the crooning girl drifted down its narrow and winding course between screening festoons of wild grapevine and Virginia creeper and bittersweet and sentinellike elms and buttonwoods and willows, it seemed the most beautiful stream that ever wound between earthly hills, as tranquilizing and placid as Lethe itself. Macraven, at the oars, had already forgotten his disquieting fears. Sybil, in the stern, trailed her fingers in the limpid amber water. The sun was high and hot; the shadows were dark and cool. Time and the world were no longer remembered.

They had decided to drift down to Anona Island, where the river widened into a broken and shallow lagoon. It was there, Sybil explained, that she usually found her first water lilies. And they could build a little fire on the island, and make tea, and have luncheon, and start out to look for the lilies later in the afternoon, when it was cooler.

They had surrendered to a mood of lazy merriment, and during that Arcadian repast were as light-hearted as children, in the face of the fact that their milk jug had fallen into the river and their lemon pie had been sat on by the unsuspecting professor. Sybil deftly spread her cloth on the sloping stretch of green turf, while Macraven blew on the fire until he was red in the face, and then fanned the embers with his hat until the smudge drove his companion, sneezing, to the upper ground, where she rubbed her eyes and looked

down on him with demure dissatisfaction.

"You know exactly as much about building a fire as I know about cooking a meal!" she declared, with a sigh of resignation.

"Why, do you mean to say you've never learned cooking, and all that sort of thing?" he demanded, turning on her suddenly. Then these biscuits, as white and light as snowflakes, on which he had been feasting his eyes, were the flowering of the humble Hannah's art!

"Pooh!" she said, with a little gesture of disgust. "I hate it!"

"But I say, supposing you should have to do that sort of thing some day?" rejoined the practical scientist, wondering why her confession should so depress and disturb him.

"But I never shall!" said Sybil airily, coming back to where the luncheon was spread. She could see by his face that he still nursed old-fashioned prejudices as to the domestic woman and her ways. "But I hate it, just the same!" she added honestly, even as she remembered that Anne was able to make Southern corn puddings about which her father would talk for months afterward.

Macraven gazed out over the water with empty and meditative eyes.

"You think I'm lazy and—and good for nothing——" began the girl, throwing pebbles into the river.

"But look at Anne, with all her wealth, with all her opportunities for idling—see how well she can do those things!"

"I'm sick of hearing of Anne!" cried the girl. "For ten years, I've had Anne held up to me as a paragon of all the virtues, and I'm tired of it! And when she comes here—and you remember what I'm saying!—*I'm going to make her act just as silly and crazy as I do!* Wait and see if I don't!" And she flung a pebble with a bang against a near-by pine stump.

When she broke the silence, at last, the change in her tone and the new wistfulness in her face strangely touched her companion's heart.

"You can't remember how poor mother used to shock all Amboro, can you? She was a Southern woman, you know—and Amboro was always so much the *other way!* I must have taken it from her! I guess I'll just have to go on cakewalking through life, for I hate hard work and sewing and cooking and cleaning up and having to think and plan ahead!"

"A girl who can—can write poetry like yours doesn't need to know all that sort of thing," the repentant man mollified the egotistic young pagan at his side, just because she was such a sad and beautiful young pagan.

But her lightness of spirit did not come back to her until they had made away with their luncheon and were strolling along the fringes of the little island, looking for pond lilies. As they sauntered on and rested and idled the time away, she cunningly wove a garland of oak leaves. Then, as he sat gazing into a little bay of translucent amber water, she took his black wide-awake from his head, with her girlishly conciliating laugh, and in its place put there the crown of leaves.

"I'm a wood nymph, you see," she said, as she knelt beside him, "and you are the wood god, Pan, and I'm crowning you with leaves that came from some old Ionian forest."

"Oh, I say!" he protested.

"No, don't touch it! Don't dare!" she cried imperiously.

"But I prefer——"

"It's lovely! It makes you look as young and romantic as a Greek god!"

The man of science became more lenient.

"And will probably give me a bulky old sunstroke before the afternoon's out!" he still protested, however, feeling gingerly at his strange headdress.

"Oh, you *scientist!*" she cried in scorn.

"But even scientists take to hats now and then!"

"Hats! Haven't you any imagination? Can't you keep in the picture for once? And it's much nicer and cooler than that old black thing, if you'd only acknowledge it!"

So, rather than hurt her feelings or disrupt her illusions, he wore the oak leaves meekly, while she wove a second garland for herself, of leaves and flowers intertwined. Then she made a mirror, by polishing the bottom of the pie pan with earth, and viewed herself therein with supreme and undisguised admiration. It was not misplaced, the young professor decided, as he looked at the vital and slender figure, the flushed and nymphlike face, crowned with woodland leaves.

"Now, I'm going to have a wand, like this, and with it conjure to your feet all those water lilies over there that look like white-and-golden stars!"

She tripped out on a fallen pine log that lay along the water's edge and waved her stick toward the tranquil lilies, blinking so sleepily up at the afternoon sky. She leaned out and stretched toward them, but they were beyond her reach.

"Help me, Pan," she cried.

He followed her out on the log, but even at the end of his own long arm, the wand was too short.

"Oh, I know!" she exclaimed abandonedly. "I'll wade in after them!"

"I—I shouldn't think of that!" warned the other, now older and wiser in past experience.

"Who cares?" demanded the emancipated Sybil.

"But isn't that the public road just over the brow of the hill, there?" he remonstrated.

"Well, it won't kill them!" retorted the paganized one.

"Let me try it first, with this longer

pole," suggested the man of science and discretion.

He did try. He leaned far out and could just sweep the closest lily head.

"There, I've got it!" he exclaimed in triumph.

The lily head broke off short, and the carefully balanced pole swung free again. But with the unexpected swing of that pole, its wielder lost his precarious equilibrium, gyrated with fluttering arms for one undecided moment, and then fell floundering into the amber-tinted water.

It was not Sybil's cry alone that he heard as he struggled and scrambled to get a footing on the muddy bottom. There fell on his ears, as he came to the surface and fought through the tangled lily stalks for safer footing, a second and more distant cry. He paid little attention to it at first, for his mind was taken up with his efforts to reach dry land. His first lucid feeling was one of wonder that his leaf-crowned companion should betray so little concern over his plight, and should be standing there staring across the river, instead of offering to give him a friendly hand up on the pine log.

The water was muddy and made his eyes smart, and it was not until he had drawn himself up and sat on the end of the log, blinking in the strong sunlight, that he gave his attention to his surroundings.

"Anne!" he heard the startled Sybil cry. "Anne, is that you? Oh, you darling Anne!"

Then he glanced up and saw that it was Anne.

It was not the staid and somber Anne that he had last seen in Amboro, but a new Anne, a figure in raiment quite as gay and summery as his own had been. Above it shimmered a pale rose silk parasol.

"But where's Dickie?" Sybil was demanding.

"He's seeing about the trunks," an-

swered Anne, coming closer to the river bank. "He can only stay for three days."

"Pshaw!" ejaculated Sybil.

The professor listened to their voices as to the voices of another world. He felt entombed and forgotten. Even Anne was ignoring him. With a sudden little gasp of indignation, he reached up and tore his ridiculous oak leaf garland from his head and flung it into the river. Then he turned from one woman to the other, angrily. It was Anne who spoke first.

"You'll take your death of cold in those wet things," she said in her even voice, as she gazed over at him with her sober gray eyes.

He rose to his feet with dignity. Sybil choked back the laugh that was bubbling to her lips.

"It is too bad!" she murmured, and made ineffectual little dabs at his ooze-covered flannels with her tiny mockery of a handkerchief.

He looked down at the scene of the accident in silence. If he had only fallen into deep water, there might have been something to redeem the ridiculousness of it all, something sinister in his fierce battle for life. As it was, even Anne herself could not keep back a momentary smile.

"I—I—hate you worse than—cats!" at last ejaculated the man of science, irascibly, unreasonably, as he turned solemnly back to the boat.

Across that stretch of open water the two women stood looking at each other, silently, pregnant, thoughtfully, as he rowed away.

## CHAPTER X.

It was with a disturbing sense of disappointment, hard to fight down, that Macraven learned on arising the next morning that the three younger people had been out since six, riding cross-country. By the time he had finished

his late and solitary breakfast, the riders were back; and by the time he had reached the veranda, Sybil and Anne were engaged in an impromptu steeplechase, vying-with each other in making their ponies jump a high-barred wooden bench on the lawn. Dickie Sewell, who was acting as judge, soon grew tired of his silent and passive rôle.

"I say, Sybil," Macraven heard him half seriously, half tauntingly call across the lawn, "hadn't you better be skipping in and finishing up that poetry of yours?"

"Oh, mush!" answered Sybil, with her hair streaming, as her pony took the bench back with a click of his forefeet on the wooden bar. "What's the use of poetry when there's a man around?" And she had the audacity, even before Anne, to blow a light and artless kiss from the palm of her hand to Master Richard Sewell.

It was some time before Anne had changed and appeared before Macraven in an Irish linen waist and a white duck skirt.

"I didn't let them wake you," she said. "I knew you'd rather get two hours of good sleep, instead of risking your neck over rail fences."

She was quite mistaken in this; but instead of putting her right, he mentioned her in silence into the library.

"What now, O King of Knowledge?" she asked, with a schoolgirl curtsy before him.

But something in the solemnity of his face, as she confronted him in the sober half lights of the great crimson-curtained room, startled her.

"What has happened?" she demanded.

Macraven, pacing the carpet, came to a stop.

"How well do you know young Sewell?" he asked.

"Why, I've known Dickie for years," she answered, puzzled.

"Then will you tell me this—is he an honorable man?"

Anne laughed.

"I've never thought of Dickie as a *man*," she replied. She was still studying her companion with perplexed eyes. "Why, what is it?"

"It's this—should Sewell and Sybil be allowed together?"

Anne sat down, a little relieved.

"Why not?" she said.

"That is not an answer," he insisted.

"Dickie is a nice boy," she murmured. "Of course he's a little young and frivolous from—from *our* standpoint. He may still be a little dandified, and think more about his clothes and his neckties than about his career. But I think he's honorable, and honest, too."

The professor of anthropology was glad that fate had made it impossible for him to wear anything but his customary suit of black that morning. He saw that there was a serious duty confronting him.

"But Sybil is so young," he said gravely. "She is so—so impressionable and impulsive and ingenuous and artless!"

"Is she so ingenuous and artless?" asked Anne.

Macraven studied her face with unalleviated solemnity. He was a little disappointed in Anne, at such a question.

"Can't you see what a child she is—a mere bundle of wayward whims and impulses and fancies?" he went on, however. "She's as innocent and unsophisticated as a flower!"

"Of course," admitted Anne, folding her hands.

"And it seems to me that it's our duty to protect her from the dangers of a life she can't know anything about. We're older and wiser than she is"—Anne was smiling down at the toes of her tiny canvas shoes—"and we obviously would be held responsible for any

foolish ideas she might get into her head, any romantic notions about—about——"

"About Dickie," prompted Anne.

"Precisely!" and the professor started pacing the carpet once more. When he spoke again, he was facing the window. "Is Sybil in love with this young man?"

"They're out in the sheep pasture gathering puffballs now!" admitted Anne, casually and quite irrelevantly.

Something that was very much like a stab of sudden pain shot through the man at the window. But there was no place for the roses of regret on the hard and narrow path of duty that he saw before him.

"Are they in love?" he reiterated.

"Why come to me," asked Anne, with just a touch of mockery in her voice, "why come to me, when you're an authority on such things?"

"Then you refuse to help me?" demanded the other, a little indignantly.

"It is rather solemn, isn't it?" admitted Anne. "But, after all, what can *we* do?"

"What can we do? We can at least keep them apart—keep the child out of harm's way—until we know just what the situation is!"

"We might incarcerate Dickie in the corner, and poke his meals in to him through the cracks," suggested Anne.

"I fail to see the humor in this situation," said the man of science, wheeling angrily on her. "It's not a time for joking! I repeat that something must be done, if what I suspect is true. All I now ask for is a suspension of activities, a separation of the two, until I can complete my—my observations. That, at least, is reasonable."

"Did you bring your microscopes up with you?" asked Anne, but so quietly that it did not reach the professor. Being wise in her generation, she relented and did not repeat the question.



"Can't you suggest anything?" asked Macraven more humbly.

Anne sat wrapped in thought. Just what she was thinking, however, she did not divulge. At last she looked up.

"Dickie has to go for the trunks this afternoon—that will take hours and hours. Let me go with Dickie."

"And Sybil?"

"Sybil will be left here with you, where she'll be safe. Perhaps you'll be able to reason her out of it. I can imagine, of course, just how you must feel about it all. Sybil is warm-blooded and impulsive and unconventional—and she's better with you, anyway!"

"But—er—isn't this rather hard on you—that long drive through the heat?"

"Not a bit! I'll enjoy every moment of it. And Dickie is really good company, you know—in his lucid intervals!"

He looked at Anne with more conscious and critical eyes. He started to speak, but on second thoughts decided to remain silent.

"You won't be too hard on Sybil?" pleaded Anne humbly, as she shook out her skirts and turned to go.

He always nursed a vague distrust of Anne in her moments of undue meekness, so he remained silent and merely bowed.

"Then I'm going out to meet the young folks," she said, from the door.

And as Macraven flung open the library window, he could hear the sound of their merry laughter, the call of their light and careless voices, across the many-colored garden and the green spaces of lawn.

He stood listening for a moment or two, and then he closed the window again with just the ghost of a sigh.

#### CHAPTER XI.

Macraven was not altogether satisfied with the outcome of his reconnaissance with Anne. He felt sure that no word had passed between the two

women—Anne was too honest for that—yet he felt equally sure that Sybil had some inkling of the conspiracy of separation that had been set on foot. And the more he thought of it, the more heartily he wished himself out of the entire affair.

Yet if Sybil suspected anything, she kept those suspicions firmly locked in her own breast. She even confessed to Macraven, as they returned to the luncheon table after waving a merry good-by to Anne and Richard, that it was nice being alone again. Then she made him sit in Dickie's place, opposite her own, and peel a pear for her.

This intrusion of the personal note made the young professor's task a hard one. It would seem like cannonading a canary, he felt, to say anything to her in her present light and artless mood. He would wait until some interval of sobriety, some moment of seriousness, stole over her, and then talk to her as he knew she must be talked to. So he peeled a second pear for her, while she leaned over the table and wiped the juice from his fingers with her own table napkin.

"I've a scheme," she said at last, with her rounded chin on her locked fingers and her elbows on the table. "We have all the rest of the day to ourselves, haven't we?"

The young professor confessed, not without a sense of vague satisfaction, that they had.

"And it's going to be hot to-night, and there's going to be a full moon!"

That, also, he could not deny.

"Well, since we've been left in charge, we're going to have a holiday—we're going to have supper together under the Wishing Oak, at nine o'clock to-night!"

"And—er—no dinner?" inquired the professor, with his physiologist's deep-rooted aversion to irregularity of meals.

"Not a bite," declared Sybil, "for I want you to be ravenous. You can





"Oh, mush!" answered Sybil, with her hair streaming, as her pony took the bench back with a click of his forefeet on the wooden bar.

have tongue sandwiches and plum jam for afternoon tea, at four, but not another bit until we get to the Wishing Oak. I'm going to have this supper of mine a feast for the fairies. Every atom of it must taste like nectar and ambrosia!"

She was sitting opposite him in silence, studying his face.

"But won't Anne think it rather odd—without her?" demurred the guardian of youth, looking up from his plate and meeting Sybil's steady and unwavering gaze.

"I told Anne to have supper in the village with Dickie; and while they're having *their* fun, we can have ours!"

Macraven wondered—a little disturbed, and for reasons he could not

fathom—if, after all, that excursion into town was fun for Anne. And for the rest of the afternoon, while Sybil kept Hannah busy in the kitchen and Terence carried mysterious bundles back and forth across the fields to the Wishing Oak, the young professor loitered about, somewhat ill at ease and indeterminately guilty of conscience, wondering just when and where would come the opportunity for his serious talk with this restless child of impulse.

It was late in the gathering twilight before Sybil spread her mysterious banquet on the wide old bench that stood under the Wishing Oak. Here and there, through a tangle of leafage, could be seen an occasional glimmer of the river, tranquil and silver in the after-

glow. The night was warm, and there was no wind. Every now and then, across the sultry silences, crept the plaintive cry of a whippoorwill. The entire river valley was jeweled and brightened with drifting fireflies. Two dim Chinese lanterns swayed and glowed among the dark boughs above their heads.

A sense of isolation from realities, of detachment from earthly worries and duties, stole over the young professor, as he helped Sybil unpack the hampers, spread the snow-white cloth, and drape and shroud the rough bench with leaves and blossoms until it looked like a bower.

Then the white-gowned girl, fluttering back and forth through the dusk, set out pyramids of strawberries on crinkled platters of lettuce leaves, and a little gourd filled with golden butter, and the whitest of homemade bread, and candied fruits, and a sealer of clotted and yellow cream, and brandied peaches in a crystal glass, and strange salads of meat and fowl, and little round cakes crowned with cream paste, and a flask of homemade wine, and a comb of honey, and a tightly packed freezer of ice cream, with a silver alcohol lamp for the coffee at the end.

John Herrin Macraven's thoughts, as he looked down at that strange repast, went back to some of his hurried and frugal meals at Amboro, bolted down while his eyes had traveled across the pages of a book propped against his sugar bowl. He even made a second and more careful inspection of their rustic table, and found himself wondering why it was he could be so infected with Sybil's light and careless enthusiasm for things of the moment. Then he remembered that it was five long hours since afternoon tea. And still again he looked at the preparing banquet, with an involuntary sigh. The girl had not erred in her judgment; he was indeed ravenous.

"How Anne would enjoy this!" he remarked inappositely, as he made away with his fifth caviar sandwich.

A shadow crossed Sybil's happy face; she gazed at him with wide and contemplative eyes.

"How Dickie would love it!" she echoed feelingly.

The professor of anthropology emitted something that was dangerously akin to a snort of disdain.

"Your knee hasn't been troubling you at all to-night, has it?" Sybil had the goodness to ask, as she uncovered the ice-cream freezer.

The professor sat up, quite sober again. But he had only to look into her serious and wistful eyes to read that there had been no slightest trace of malice in her interrogation. She leaned back, looking at him, idly tearing roses to pieces, dropping the petals into the basket at her side. Then, with a laugh, she flung off her little outer wrap and stood before him in the square of soft moonlight, framed by the tree branches on the sloping turf.

"Isn't it heavenly?" she murmured.

The professor of anthropology remembered neither Master Richard Sewell nor the carefully balanced phrases of reproof that he had prepared for his companion's shell-like ear. Instead of recalling this stern duty, he joined Sybil in gazing up at the great silver globe of light that was rising higher and higher in the eastern heavens.

"It is mysterious, isn't it?" he cried. "Why, it's almost intoxicating!"

Suddenly stooping to the basket at her feet, she lifted on high two handfuls of rose petals.

"Listen!" she said.

She began to recite, in a low and modulated voice that seemed almost a musical accompaniment to the words, and as she did so, she allowed the rose petals to flutter loose and drift about her in the tranquil moonlight. Her

face was upturned, the profile clear cut against the gloom behind it.

"O sad and golden summer moon,  
Where are the lovers thou hast known,  
Where are their sighs and kisses strewn?"

"Once some Ionian girl's low tune,  
Heartsick with love, to thee was blown,  
O sad and golden summer moon!"

"And some pale Tyrian youth, too soon  
From rapture torn, to thee made moan.  
Where are their sighs and kisses strewn?"

"Once Sappho's wild and lyric rune  
Went up to thee from islands lone,  
O sad and golden summer moon!"

"In Rome and Athens, June by June,  
The tears of lovers were thine own.  
Where are their sighs and kisses strewn?"

"Aye, down the ages, night and noon,  
Love and love's heart to thee hast flown.  
Where are their sighs and kisses strewn,  
O sad and golden summer moon?"

The poem ended, and the girl was silent. Her hands fell to her sides, and a little fluttering sigh escaped her lips.

John Herrin Macraven swallowed hard before he essayed to speak, for, to his own surprise, he found that his feelings had brought a sudden lump to his throat.

The girl crossed slowly over to where he sat, as in a trance. He reached out a timid hand and took hers in his own. She surrendered it, without hesitation, apparently without conscious thought, for her wide and dreamy eyes were still turned to the full moon above the treetops.

As he did not speak, she wheeled slowly, at last, and looked down at him. Their eyes met. He felt the vital warmth of her close, yet careless hand-clasp creep through his body. A soft anæsthesia seemed stealing over him. Yet, even in that moment of ethereal content, he was teased by the vague, yet familiar impression that he was being made the victim of some vast conspiracy of Nature, that he was being

pursued by some intangible and yet implacable force.

Sybil's arm crept up to his shoulder, and he no longer psychologized.

Yet still he did not speak, for as he was about to open his lips, the deep-noted baying of the house dogs seemed to tear a sudden hole in the silence that had enveloped them like a veil.

The barking grew louder, came closer; across the fields drifted the disturbing sound of voices.

"What can that be?" asked the professor of anthropology. His voice sounded strained and unnatural to his own ears.

Sybil did not answer. He only felt the fingers in his clasp twitch a little.

"That can't be young Sewell and Anne back already, can it?" he demanded inadequately, as he rose to his feet. He stood listening, as the sounds grew louder. "Yes," he admitted, "those are the dogs. And that's Anne's voice I hear, I'm certain!"

"Oh, bother!" said Sybil, in a strangely irritable and earthly tone of voice.

The moon, palely serene and tranquil, still floated, an ivory-tinted balloon, above the motionless treetops. The odor of the dew-wet flowers still stole up to Macraven's nostrils. But it was not the same moon and not the same perfume.

## CHAPTER XII.

It was not until the clear and coldly penetrating light of the following morning broke in upon him that Macraven fully realized how ignominiously he had failed in his efforts toward a disciplining of the airy and unchastened Sybil. It had been his intention to make no direct allusion to this failure and the reasons thereof, but he felt that Anne would not be satisfied with silence. It was, accordingly, with a more or less troubled and apprehensive mind that

he confronted his fellow conspirator, that morning, on the veranda.

"You haven't given me one crumb of Amboro news, as yet," he told her temporizingly, as he took a wicker chair at her side.

And if he seemed a little overeager to know if it was hot and dull in town, and whither this family had gone and whither that, and indeed, a hundred and one different trifling bits of news and gossip, Anne betrayed no sign that she even dimly apprehended the reason for this feverish flow of interrogation. From Amboro, he glided easily off into the avenues of science, and it was not long before he had forgotten all motive for that movement in the sober delights which the mere browsing along such well-known paths brought to him.

As they sat there talking together, he could catch occasional glimpses of Sybil and young Sewell, through the shrubbery, busily engaged in marking out a tennis court. For once, for some undiscovered reason, he could look down at them calmly and disinterestedly. He even tried to tell Anne what a will-of-the-wisp Sybil was, what an elflike spirit she had always seemed to him, fluttering about the old orchard and singing about the old gardens, a dreamy-hearted epicurean, drifting down her gay life like a butterfly floating through a world of flowers. And she always seemed to strike such a vivid note against the landscape; her very choice of color was always so artless and yet so effective.

The listening Anne, being a woman of the world, acquiesced in this, and held her peace. But after luncheon she reappeared on the veranda in a sailor suit of white lawn with a soft collar, and with three moss roses pinned at her waist and a vivid bud or two in her hair.

The professor of anthropology, looking up from his book, gazed at her with startled and almost unbelieving eyes, as

she sat there with her head bent over a magazine, oblivious of his presence. It seemed, as he gazed, that he had always before looked on a chrysalis of Anne—on an Anne, in fact, in the pupa state.

"What *have* you been doing to yourself?" he demanded, sitting up, a little jealous of that lost and somber Anne who had now passed, he felt, forever beyond his world and his reach.

Anne laughed a little.

"Sybil's been telling me not to part my hair in the middle."

"Did you?"

"Of course, always—until to-day."

"Do you know," confessed the honest Macraven, "I never once thought of the fact that you *had* hair, until this moment!"

"But I had, you see, all the time," said Anne.

A song sparrow on a Japanese almond tree trilled out its sweet five-noted call, like a tiny fountain of sound. The bees droned and hummed about the quiet garden. The wind stirred and died in the treetops. A sense of peace after unrest stole over the young professor of anthropology.

He sighed, audibly. Anne looked up quickly at the sound. Then she, too, gazed out over the gardens and the treetops, and, as her companion had done, found herself surrendering to the spirit of peace that brooded over the tranquil landscape.

"Don't you sometimes think," said Anne at last, "that we're always working and fretting too much, down at Amboro?"

"There's always so much to do, so much to be done," sighed the man of science.

"But I wonder if it pays—to crowd beauty and peace like this out of life?" asked Anne dreamily, her eyes on the swaying treetops.

"But life is so short—something must be surrendered, don't you think?" he argued. He, too, was looking out over

the world of sun and shadow and wav-  
ing trees.

"But should we crowd out the things that make life best worth living?" Anne queried softly. "After all, shouldn't the appeal of beauty be as strong as the appeal of work? It has always seemed to me that it is only when work is touched with beauty, in some way or another, that it is worth while."

Macraven looked at her searchingly. Anne, of all persons, transformed into an apostle of the ethereal issues of life!

"Life was not made for work, but work was made for life!" he quoted.

"But it's worth remembering that the old philosopher who first said that had given the best of his life to drudgery before he found it out," retorted Anne.

"I suppose it ought really to be a happy mixture of the two. For it's only by labor that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labor can be made happy."

"I like that better than your Spencer," assented Anne.

A soft rustle of skirts cut short any answer Macraven might have essayed. It was Sybil, pink and glowing, with a tennis racket in her hand.

"Still talking of poor old Spencer?" cried the girl, leaning on the back of Anne's wicker chair. "Or what new and world-moving, metaphysical hypothesis are you two old dears propounding? You're like two ants—no, like two moles, burying yourselves in books and abstractions when there's such a lovely world just outside! And you think I'm silly and empty just because I go along like a bee, only looking for honey!"

"The bee, dear, deserves every flower it finds," said the older woman, though even Macraven noticed that she had winced at the "two old dears." It was the first time Sybil had ever given him a sense of intrusion. It was the first time he had been able to study her with a feeling of detachment.

He reopened his book and sought for his place once more, abstractedly.

"No more reading to-day, sir!" cried the girl, placing her two small sun-browned hands over the open pages with a mock show of sternness. "We've all got to go and gather fresh strawberries, for we're going to have one of the far-famed Shotwell strawberry shortcakes!"

"Let's!" said Anne jubilantly.

And on the way to the patch, the young professor of anthropology came face to face with a new and strangely disconcerting truth. He found that it was almost as delightful to lift Anne, for all her solemn eyes, down from a rail fence, as it was to help the ebullient Sybil.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Early the next afternoon Sybil and Dickie Sewell made ready for half a day of trout fishing.

"If we're not back for dinner," Sybil announced, "don't think of waiting. We'll cook our own supper, if we have to, down on the river bank!"

She noticed the look of disapprobation that flitted across Macraven's face.

"The same as you and I did that day up at Anona Island," she added, turning to Macraven with a bewitching smile.

And she was off, with Dickie carrying the creel and rods at her heel, waving a merry good-by to them as she passed out of sight beyond the syringa bushes.

"Happy youngsters!" said Anne, as she stood looking after them.

"It's astonishing, the emancipation of the modern woman!" was Macraven's answer.

All that afternoon, in fact, he felt listless and irritable. It was too hot for walking, and reading seemed out of the question. When Anne went indoors to write letters, he idled about the garden, and then returned and paced the ve-



randa once more, abstracted and pre-occupied.

The dinner hour came and went without the return of Sybil. Anne went to the orchard gate, at Macraven's suggestion, for one last look. But there was no one in sight, so they sat down and ate alone. Evening came on, warm and soft and gray. A silvery-brown dusk crept over the field. The twilight deepened, and at last, with the coming of darkness, Macraven sent for Anne.

She could see by the knit brows and the familiar old Dean-of-Amboro look that he was worried, even before he spoke.

"What are we to do about this?" he asked her shortly.

"About what?"

"About the fact that it's nine o'clock at night, and Sybil and young Sewell not yet home!"

"But what difference does it make?"

He looked at her in astonishment.

"It makes the difference," he solemnly asseverated, "that my presence in this house practically constitutes a guardianship over this child!"

"She's not such a child as you may think," ventured Anne.

"Child or no child, it is my duty to exercise that discretion which her own father might."

Anne remained silent. The feeling took possession of him that there was something guarded and disingenuous in her position toward him. He felt that she was repressing something.

"Anne Appleby, do you know where these young people are?" he suddenly demanded.

She studied his face for a moment in silence.

"Yes," said Anne at last. "I do."

"Then I insist on knowing!"

"Why should you?" she in turn demanded. "What good would it do?"

"Then I am to regard you as—as circuitous as they are?" he flashed back at her.

"Just as you choose, O King of Knowledge!" she told him mockingly, as she took up her novel.

Never before had he seen Anne guilty of a gesture of dismissal. It amazed him, for—a moment, but the mingled pride and dignity of a career crowned with authority saved him, in the end. He turned on his heel, went down the steps, hurried over the dark lawn, and made his resolute way to the eastern end of the great farm, in search of the fugitives.

The first fierce fires of his rage had somewhat burned away by the time he reached the pasture field. His alleviated indignation, however, brought with it no slightest weakening of his resolution. He told himself, again and again, that there would be some good, plain speaking when he came upon that truant couple. It was not that he resented their love-making, if love-making it was. But duplicity and double-dealing, this secretive and artful way of going about things, was more than he was able to endure.

The full golden moon, by this time, was well up above the quiet hills and treetops. The air was warm, yet fresh and odorous with the heavy dew that glimmered like seed pearls on the clover leaves and shimmered on the cobwebs between the fence rails, until, in the soft light, they looked like little fish nets of silver swung in a sea of opal.

No soul, however preoccupied or indurated, could withstand the charm of such a night. Macraven walked on less feverishly, stopping now and then to breathe in the many-odored, misty air along the meadow bottoms. The very earth on which he walked seemed etherealized, insubstantial. Almost unconsciously he found himself quoting Sybil's poem of love and moonlight:

"O sad and golden summer moon,  
Where are the lovers thou hast known,  
Where are their sighs and kisses strewn?"



He stood still, ankle-deep in the wet, heavy grasses, looking up at the moon, a spirit of soft exaltation creeping through him at the beauty of the night. As he stood there, looking and listening, the faintest lap and ripple of water filled the quiet air. He realized that he was close to the river and moved forward peeringly, looking for some path.

Then he drew up suddenly, with a start. For before him, not two hundred feet away, outlined against the stretch of open water that lay beyond them like a winding ribbon of silver, sat the runaways for whom he was seeking.

He noticed Sybil first. She was sitting beside young Sewell, on the smooth bark of an old overturned buttonwood tree. She was gazing in silence out at the moonlight and the rippling water. One hand supported her chin, the other rested on the shoulder of the youth at her side. Macraven could see her profile clear cut against the light, and through that lucid, yet muffled luminosity, strangely enough, both her face and that of the boy at her side seemed suddenly statuesque, as impersonal and beautiful as Praxitelian marble. It was, perhaps, due to the refracted light and the dampness of the river air, but around each youthful head hung an opalized circle of light. For causes that he could not fathom, the watching Macraven was touched and awed into a mood of hesitation, unable to fight down the sense of intrusion that oppressed him.

Then he turned his head away quickly, warned by some movement from the silent lovers. He knew, in that moment when he had looked away, that their lips had met.

A sudden and overmastering torrent of indignation swept through him. It angered him to think that even unconsciously they had betrayed him into this mean and unlovely figure of the eaves-

dropper. All his resoluteness of purpose came back to him, and he moved forward to make his presence known.

As he did so, he was conscious of a second presence in his neighborhood. He turned quickly, and found Anne at his side. She was bareheaded, too, and as she lifted her face to him, unusually pale in the pale moonlight, he could see the little diamonds of dew in her thick hair. She reached out a hand and caught him by the arm.

"Don't!" she whispered.

"Don't what?" he asked, not yet recovered from his surprise.

"Shhhh!" she whispered, with her forefinger lifted to her lips.

She, too, Macraven saw, looked ethereal and unearthly and sylphlike in the pale glow of that spiritualizing moonlight.

"Why shouldn't I?" he asked, gazing at the unconscious and happy couple on the fallen buttonwood tree.

"Oh, don't!" pleaded Anne, and something in the solemnity of her voice overawed him.

"But why not?" he persisted, hesitating.

"Because—can't you see," she murmured, without looking at him, "it's—it's love?"

He looked toward the moonlit water and the lovers once more, and for a moment or two remained there, silent. Then he turned to Anne, mystified by the rapt softness of her voice, amazed by the indefinable transformation of her face. Through the silence she could hear his sudden heavy sigh.

And then they turned and walked homeward together, side by side, in silence still.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Whatever may have been Macraven's true feelings, during that silent walk with Anne and during the night that followed, he made no effort to give them utterance. About him, however,



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ebullient Sybil.

the next morning, Anne was able to detect a sense of repression, of careful and studious self-control. He confessed to her that he had not rested well. He thought perhaps it was getting his ankles wet in the heavy dew, or perhaps the closeness of the night, that had made his sleep so broken.

Anne, sniffing the morning air, said she was glad she wasn't in town on such a day. She was sorely troubled as to how the Birdwells' babies, who should be teething that month, would stand the heat.

"We're so fine and lazy and comfortable up here that we keep forgetting about the sufferings of other people," she went on, leaning back in her capacious wicker rocker.

"But, after all, isn't it just as harrowing to watch other people being supremely happy—especially when you don't happen to be unusually happy yourself?"

Anne thought she knew the particular people to whom he was referring.

"I think we ought to study happiness just as carefully as we study sorrow," she said with her habitual solemn headshake.

"But it's so hard to swallow—some one else's happiness," pursued Macraven. "We get envious of it. We're always thinking of how much we're missing ourselves."

"Then it ought to teach us the trick for our own use," said Anne. "That's why I feel, so often, that Sybil—yes, and even young Dickie Sewell—is doing me such a lot of good."

Macraven had never thought of Sybil, much less of young Sewell, as an instrument of inward reorganization. And he told Anne so, with no mincing of words.

"I think you're wrong there," said truthful Anne. "She's really influencing you—even you—more than you imagine. She's showing you a side of life you never really saw before. She's

opening your eyes—and mine, too—to the fact that the decorative side of existence is more enduring and more important than we really thought it was. For, in a way, I think it's possible to get *too* wise, in this world, don't you?"

Macraven was doubtful as to that point.

"Why, we'd almost forgotten there was anything but neutral tints in clothes, and in life as well," pursued Anne, with the persistency of a person long silent, but at last determined to say, once for all, everything that had been groping for utterance. "And look at Sybil there just beyond the syringas! Just look at her in that green morning gown with white ruffles. She looks as cool and fresh as a bit of the ocean. And look at the great bunch of Jack roses she's holding! See what an eye for color and harmony she instinctively has! And she has the same instinct for the bright and warm feelings of life!"

"But how long would that childish sort of life appeal to you or me?" demanded Macraven, in defense of his ultimate dignities of existence.

"It might help to keep our hearts from getting macadamized," responded Anne, with her eyes on the distant tree-tops.

"I suppose a life of effort *does* make us hard!" conceded the professor of anthropology.

"That's the blessing of children," said the ingenuous Anne. "They keep the dust off the heart."

Macraven had the feeling of a skater on exceedingly thin ice, and decided that a retreat to side issues would not be untimely.

"Surely she is a light and airy creature!" he exclaimed, as they caught a glimpse of the rose-burdened Sybil, in her gown of sea-green breaking into a foam of white at the edges, loitering about the shrubbery of the lower garden.

"She's waiting for Dickie," assever-

ated intuitive Anne. She leaned forward, with her chin on her hand. "I envy that child her sense of color!"

Macraven looked at her with widened eyes, a little impatient, apparently, of the mood of gloomy self-disapprobation that had taken possession of them.

"Fine feathers don't always make fine—— Anne Appleby, I'm going down into that garden and *get you a bunch of those Jack roses!*"

And this he promptly did. Anne took them and pinned them on, with a little blush. Then she gazed at her own broken reflection in the long French window behind her. He almost excused her look of content.

"I believe you're getting vain!" declared the professor of anthropology. "As vain as Sybil!"

"Perhaps I am," admitted Anne.

And although the young professor of anthropology scowled darkly at this evidence of growing frivolity in the old-time sober Anne, it was noticeable that all that morning, as he went up and down the bright parterres of color in the lower flower garden, he carried neither pocket microscope nor bug net, but from time to time stooped over the flowers and studied them intently.

Yet the habit of a lifetime reasserted itself, a few hours later, when he overheard the nervous cluck and chatter of two mating chipmunks in the tangled grapevines east of Sybil's arbor. He crept noiselessly in through the underbrush, pausing from time to time, the better to observe the strange advances and retreats, the strange allurements and evasions, flights and pursuits, of the tiny amative animals amid the tangled grapevine.

As he halted, for the tenth time, in his stealthy advance, he suddenly realized that he had crept upon more than two innocently mating chipmunks. For there, plain to his eye, yet quite unconscious of his presence, sat Sybil and young Sewell, in a little sheltered coign

of the garden between a clump of cedar and a cluster of flowering sumac.

He hesitated, scarcely knowing whether to advance or to retreat, when the sound of their voices arrested all motion.

"He's really not such a bad sort, old Macraven," the youth at Sybil's side was saying. "If we could only get him to help me along with the faculty a bit—then, angel, it would be November, at the latest."

Macraven closed his eyes to the demonstration that followed. Then he heard the youth dolorously add:

"But Macraven's not the helping sort!"

What Sybil said to this he did not hear—did not care to hear; his only thoughts now were of opportune and silent escape.

"But not with *him?*" asked the unguarded voice of Sewell, almost disgustedly.

"And why not with him?" responded the rising voice of Sybil. "I think he's very nice. I don't know what mightn't have happened—if—well, if something else hadn't happened!"

"But he's so tall and thin—and—and *threadbare*. He's so confounded grinding and self-centered! Why, he's—*he's as cold-blooded as a toad!*" ejaculated Sewell.

"That's only because we don't know him and don't understand him. He's had to be that way—he's never been taught differently. And, anyway, he's not frivolous! And you say that just because you're jealous!"

"Jealous? Of poor old Macraven!" And the young man's ironic laughter echoed out across the quiet garden.

Honor forbade that the professor of anthropology should stand there and listen to more. He crept silently back through the shadowy underbrush and made his escape. He crept away like a bruised and stricken soul, his eyes wide with pain and wonder, his thin face

white with some ever-increasing agony of mind.

As cold-blooded as a toad!

Like the stricken animal, too, he carried his wound back to his lair, to his oldest and most intimate surroundings. He went straight to the big crimson-curtained, gloomy, shelf-lined library, and locked himself in. It had always seemed to him that he could think more clearly and more coolly when surrounded by books.

It was no grim and moving dénouement, no tremendous and volcanic upheaval of spirit, that overtook him as he paced the worn and faded carpet of that silent library. But suddenly his whole career lay before him, as wide and gray and empty as a flat waste of sand. Out of that waste, here and there, seemed to grow a melancholy and lonely cactus of bitter accomplishment. Yet it lay there, an arid and empty waste, out of which he had never yet been taught to irrigate the alkali of egoism. From his birth, he had indeed been narrow and self-seeking. He had thought only of himself, of his advancement, of his success. The strong propulsions of comradeship, the quiet fires of friendship, the transfiguring glow of sacrifice—these were almost alien and unknown to him! The poor, the needy, the unhappy—and there were so many of them traveling the same long road along which he himself was fighting his way!—what had he done for them? Had he ever stopped and listened, had he ever stooped and made their lives his own? Had he ever felt their rags, in that imagination which should make all men brothers, on his own back? Had he ever walked in their worn and crippled shoes? Had he ever suffered and lived with them, even in thought? Had he ever felt their human cravings and needs, sink into his own soul?

No, through it all, from first to last, he *had* been as cold-blooded as a toad.

All his world, he told himself in that flood of bitter self-abasement, all his world had been made up of self-glory. His mind had been filled with the problem of how he might evade the obligations of manhood, of friendship, of love itself. He had even been afraid of the natural man in himself, of his instinctive and timeless emotions. Even his affections had been affections of self-gain, and, above all things, his jealousies had been selfish jealousies. He had stooped to begrudge Sybil and her lover their passing romance, their youth dream, their first compelling passion!

Grimly and feverishly he strode back and forth, in that silent library, meeting and combating, face to face, this enemy who until then had never dared to fight him in the open.

#### CHAPTER XV.

When Anne came down the next morning, she could hear Sybil in the music room, singing Tosti's "Good-by" to Sewell. It carried to her, as she stood in the hallway listening for a minute or two, some wayward sense of autumn. It made her heart heavy, as the fall of the first leaves of some lost summer might.

On the veranda she was confronted by the professor of anthropology with a slip of yellow paper in his hand. It was a telegram. A boy had ridden over from Cedar Hills with the message, and stood at the foot of the wide steps awaiting his answer. Macraven had not appeared for dinner the night before, and Anne was startled by his white face and the lines of doubt and anxiety about his puzzled eyes. She noticed also that his fingers, as he held the flimsy sheet of yellow paper, trembled a little.

"It's no bad news, I hope?" she asked, as Macraven looked up from his message and saw her standing before him.



"No, it's not bad news," he said wearily, as he folded the sheet with the air of having come to some final decision. "The Amboro senate ask me if I could take charge of their extension movement for the rest of the summer. They also offer me the chair in psychology beginning next October."

She did not seem as startled as she might have been. It was, in fact, Macraven's pale and troubled face that held her anxious eyes.

"But isn't this the best of news?" she asked, still watching his face.

"I might have thought so—once," he said, with a ghost of a sigh. Then he turned on her abruptly. "What do you know about this offer?" he demanded.

"What should I know? What *could* I know?" she parried.

"I feel that you should know, because I feel that some hint or suggestion for it first came from you, long before it officially reached the hands of the University of Amboro senate!"

"Who am I, to think of dictating appointments to a college senate?" demanded Anne.

"Under the circumstances," he went on, with his slow and deliberate firmness, "I could not accept the offer."

"But you *must*!" cried Anne.

He looked at her again, almost wistfully.

"Can't you see I don't deserve it?" he asked, less adamant in his tone. "Can't you see that it's unfair for me to use my friends for my own advancement?"

"That's hairsplitting!" said the practical Anne. "It's what you've always looked for and waited for, and there's no reason why you shouldn't take it."

"It means too much work, too much worry and grind, and getting nothing back out of life!"

The young professor's eyes, as he spoke, were on the shadowy gardens, on the sunlit orchard and the undulat-

ing meadowlands, fair and fresh in the morning sunlight.

"But it's the work you love!" cried the puzzled woman at his side.

"I know I did, or thought I did, once. But during these last few weeks, I've had a chance to think things over, and it's just come home to me how small and narrow that life has been. It seems to me that all my existence has been spent in poring over books and pounding on lecture tables and worrying after some new degree."

"One minute," interrupted the practical Anne. "Have you had your breakfast?"

The man of science had quite forgotten about such things as breakfasts.

"Then let everything go until you've gone in and had your coffee and eggs. Please do! I'll bring the boy out some berries and cream, so he won't mind waiting for his answer."

And as Anne was obdurate, there was nothing for Macraven to do but yield.

There was something almost pleasurable, he noticed, in this gentle coercion of hers. It was the same with her air of placid compulsion as she insisted that he should take a second cup of coffee and a second egg.

"Uncle Henry was telling me that one of the College Row houses goes with the chair in psychology," said the elliptical Anne, over her coffee cup.

"I had never thought of that," admitted Macraven.

"And that means you could leave that damp old hole of a deanery," pursued Anne.

The professor of anthropology felt his left knee, absent-mindedly and yet apprehensively.

"Exactly!" triumphed Anne, as she made note of the movement. "And that damp hole was where you got it!"

He thought of the tower, rising above his little windows by night, of the wide campus beneath him in the white moon-



light, of the shadowy maples beyond the tennis courts, of the heavy smell of hyacinths in the little deanery garden. He would be sorry to lose them all; they had grown so much a part of his life. Yet when he tried to picture himself as viewing them, season after season, year after year, from the same little jaillike windows, his mind recoiled from the emptiness of such a future—recoiled with a feeling that was almost terror. No, there could be no going back to old and outlived conditions. The training of a lifetime had given him the onward and upward view. He could live only by progression. Whether it brought him anxiety and fatigue, unrest or years of calm endeavor, he could exist only in the consciousness of advance. He could never be an idler. This *dolce far niente* life into which he had dipped for a month or two had its advantages, but without the salt of labor its sweetness was cloying and enfeebling. For, after all, effort and aspiration had their sublimities.

"You're going to take it," said Anne, with conviction.

"Yes, I'm going to take it," he answered deliberately, after a moment's pause.

"I knew you would," she said simply. And her face was irradiated with a sudden soft flush of pleasure. "I knew you would, when you'd thought it over!"

They were interrupted by the sudden entrance of Sybil. She was loaded down with sprays of syringa, and her cheeks were flushed and her hair tumbled from running.

"I'm starving!" she cried, as she flung herself into her chair between Anne and Macraven. She looked very young and fresh and girlish in her pinned-up green skirt, wet with dew around the edges.

"Talking science?" she asked shortly, as she reached for the fruit, as if thinly

annoyed at the wordless sense of intrusion that had greeted her appearance.

It was nothing more than the glance of a second that passed between the older man and woman, yet, brief as it was, it carried something intimate and interpretative. It was the first time, Macraven felt, that any action of Sybil's had translated itself into mere flippancy.

"My good people," said Sybil, as she devoured her cherries, looking from one to the other with mock consternation, "I'm going to give you both up! I've done my best, and you're hopeless! I wash my hands of you! I'll never make you believe in witches and fairies, and the windflower at the end of the rainbow, and the eternal beauties of the Arcadian life, if you're going to poke over a coffeepot all morning. You're as bad as Dickie, who's still in bed, and won't turn out until half past ten at the earliest! And I've walked three miles and more!"

"Anne and I intend to walk six miles and more before luncheon!" declared Macraven, with vigor.

"Do we?" said Anne.

"We do!" repeated the young professor of anthropology, meeting her gaze determinedly. There was a new note of authority in his voice.

Sybil flashed a quick glance from one to the other. Then her eyes widened and she slowly and significantly ejaculated:

"*Highty-tighty!*"

Macraven looked up, and as he did so, he heard Anne cry, "Silly!" to the laughing girl, accompanying it by an impulsive little squeeze of the hand across the table. The movement was inscrutable to him.

## CHAPTER XVI.

It is true that Macraven and Anne went for their walk, as the man of science had determined. But his declaration that their walk was to take them

six long miles and more across the open country was only another evidence that man as a prophet is not always infallible.

They started off in silence, and in silence they crossed the orchard and the clover field and the sheep pasture. And at each step they took Macraven uneasily realized more and more the weight of all he had to say, until he felt entangled and bound in the very complexity of his emotions.

He was wondering whether, at heart, Anne did not hate him, whether beneath her silence there did not lurk some yet ungerminated seed of contempt. It troubled him to think how far apart, not only from this warm and silent woman at his side, but from all his fellow beings, his lonely paths of life had taken him.

"Oh, you must despise me!" he cried out, with a sudden and tremulous note of passion and self-hate that caused Anne to draw up, wide-eyed and staring.

"Despise you?" she gasped. "Why should I despise you?"

"Why shouldn't any woman despise selfishness and smallness and meanness of spirit? Why should any woman be satisfied with the dregs and husks of a man's life, and be ready to dignify those odious remnants with the name of friendship, even?"

Never before had Anne seen his thin, ascetic face so touched with emotion.

"Do you mean that every woman should love an idler in life?" she demanded. "Don't you think that women realize that work has its nobility as well as its obligations?"

"But when that work makes a man blind, and leaves him hard and narrow and exacting?"

"It's not the work's fault, but the man's," answered Anne, very quietly, yet very bravely.

He turned to her suddenly.

"Anne Appleby, candidly and hon-

estly, why did you refuse to marry me six years ago?"

She slipped down weakly on the soft turf that sloped to the river bank. The color had left her face completely.

"I don't think I could explain to you," she answered at last, gazing at him with what was almost a look of appeal.

"Then it *was* my selfishness that made you afraid of me," he almost exulted. "It *was* that you were afraid of what I was making myself, or had already made myself!"

"It was only the selfishness of youth," said Anne softly.

"But it was selfishness, utter selfishness!" he groaned in his bitterness of heart.

"But I knew—and you yourself must have known—that some day you would grow beyond it," argued Anne, looking out over the wind-rippled river.

"If you had only told me!" he lamented.

She marveled at the intensity of his misery.

"Can't you see," she said at last, "it had to come of itself? It would have been worse than useless if it had come to you except by way of your own heart."

"And all the while," he continued, more quietly, "all the while *you* were living for others. You were thinking of the needy and the suffering. You were doing good, and getting something tangible and worth while out of life."

"No; no, no," she denied. "I was only a woman. And that was all there was for me to do." She was afraid he would see the teardrops on her lashes, so she bent her head and laughed a little. "Though I *did* hate to hear you make fun of me about those woolen mitts I was always knitting for the Indian children!"

Her laugh seemed to shake the tragedy out of the moment. Macraven

looked up at her with a less troubled brow.

"How old are you, Anne?" he asked, with that ingenuousness peculiar to the mind of lifelong abstraction.

"Old enough to be your mother—almost," replied Anne, feeling that it was safer thus to skirt the morasses of their former solemnity.

"You *have* been one," said the candid man of science, earnestly and just a little ruefully. "You've been better than one to me for years!"

"Don't dare to say how many!" warned Anne.

"You're twenty-seven," said Macraven, with sudden conviction.

"You once said you'd never trust a woman over twenty-five who wouldn't lie about her age," reminded Anne.

"After all, it's a lovely age, twenty-seven!" sighed Macraven.

"I find it very comfortable," admitted Anne.

Then a silence fell over them. The leaves rustled; the wind stirred the water; somewhere in the remote distance the bobolinks called and caroled.

"Anne," said the professor of anthropology quietly.

He scarcely knew how to go on, and in his difficulty, he caught Anne's hand and held it in his own. It was a woman's hand, warm and soft and supple, with all its hints of latent strength and purpose. And it was an enchanting hand to hold, he discovered, to his great surprise. It was not a dimpled and trifling and dainty little hand, a useless little tinted shell of a hand, like Sybil's, for instance. There was a strength and a sacredness about it, he felt, something far above the mere tissue and bone, something that seemed to make it the shield and the receptacle for that sacred torch of life which had passed from woman to wistful woman from the first day of mortal existence down to now.

He looked at her timidly. A strange softness hovered about her face; some old and mysterious wistfulness lurked in her gray eyes. There had been no transfiguration, he told himself; it was the Anne he had always known. But he suddenly awoke to the startling consciousness that she was a compellingly beautiful woman—a beautiful woman whom some inscrutable awakening in his own troubled breast suddenly made the goal of all activity, the height of all aspiration.

"Do you know what I am going to say, Anne?" he asked, with a new and tender note of pleading in his voice. "I am going to ask you *something* that I ought not to ask you, I know. I am going to ask you to marry me. Can't you see," he went on more passionately, "that I need you and want you, from the bottom of my heart! I have always needed and wanted you. But now I know I couldn't live and be happy without you! I've just had my eyes opened to what it means, to what it may do, this love you have brought out into the light. I know I can't offer you much, Anne—I've lost and surrendered so many things. But I can't loose and surrender you! It's you—you—you——"

"Oh, are you sure of that?" she asked, a little tremulously.

"I know it as surely as I know that you're too good and pure and noble-hearted for me. I know it as surely as I know that all my life would go toward trying to make your life as full and happy and complete as it ought to be!"

It was from no momentary tumult of the blood that he was speaking, he knew only too well; it was no boyish emotion that had shaken him out of that old encysting shell of his former life. It was hunger and want made manifest; it was a propulsion, mysterious, implacable, that henceforth for good or evil must rule all his life.

"Can't you learn to love me, Anne?" he pleaded.

She had not intended to surrender to him at that moment, or in that way, but to her sudden bewilderment, she found herself in Macraven's subjugating arms. And as suddenly, almost, time and the world, the past and the future, fell away from her, forgotten, obliterated. For his lips had met hers, and she had quivered and relaxed and paled under his first kiss.

## CHAPTER XVII.

The evening train that connected the Arcadian village of Cedar Hills with a hurrying and fretting outside world was an "accommodation," apparently touched with the tranquillity of the quiet valleys through which it crept.

Yet Anne and Macraven, alone on the back platform of the last coach, seemed to find their rate of travel quite fast enough.

They did not talk much, that solitary couple, but their very silences seemed companionable and eloquent of things unuttered, as they sat there hand in hand, swaying to the movement of the car along the rough roadbed.

Macraven looked upward at the stars.

"That is Venus, see, marching up out of the east," he said. "And those are the Pleiades, there, just above us. And there, to the north, is the Great Bear, wheeling about the Polar Star—"

"As life wheels about love," interrupted Anne softly.

"No, as I must always wheel about you," solemnly corrected Macraven. "For that is the North Star, and it never moves. It is as true and steadfast as—as Anne herself. And that is the way my life shall always turn and revolve about her, from this day on!"

"Do you know that you're a rhapsodist, after all?" murmured Anne happily.

"Sybil said I was a bug hunter," he demurred. "Poor Sybil!"

"Yes, poor Sybil!" Anne murmured. "After all, she was sorry to see us go!"

"And you were never really jealous of her?" asked the man of truth, a little uneasily.

Anne looked up from his shoulder.

"Of course not," she answered. "No more than I could be of a bunch of lilacs that took your mind off your work, or a bird that made your holiday seem brighter. No, I'm glad of Sybil! I feel grateful to think that you knew her—for it was Sybil who helped to bring us to—to each other!"

"Who helped *me*," he corrected.

There was silence for a moment or two, and then he said:

"I must see what I can do for young Sewell when I get back, for *her* sake."

The pressure of Anne's hand on his arm was her grateful response to this.

"Do you know," he said to Anne, "I always used to think that we had to look down on life from one of two towers, I mean from one of two opposing and incongruous heights. One was built of granite, huge and grim and hard—I suppose you would call it the tower of labor."

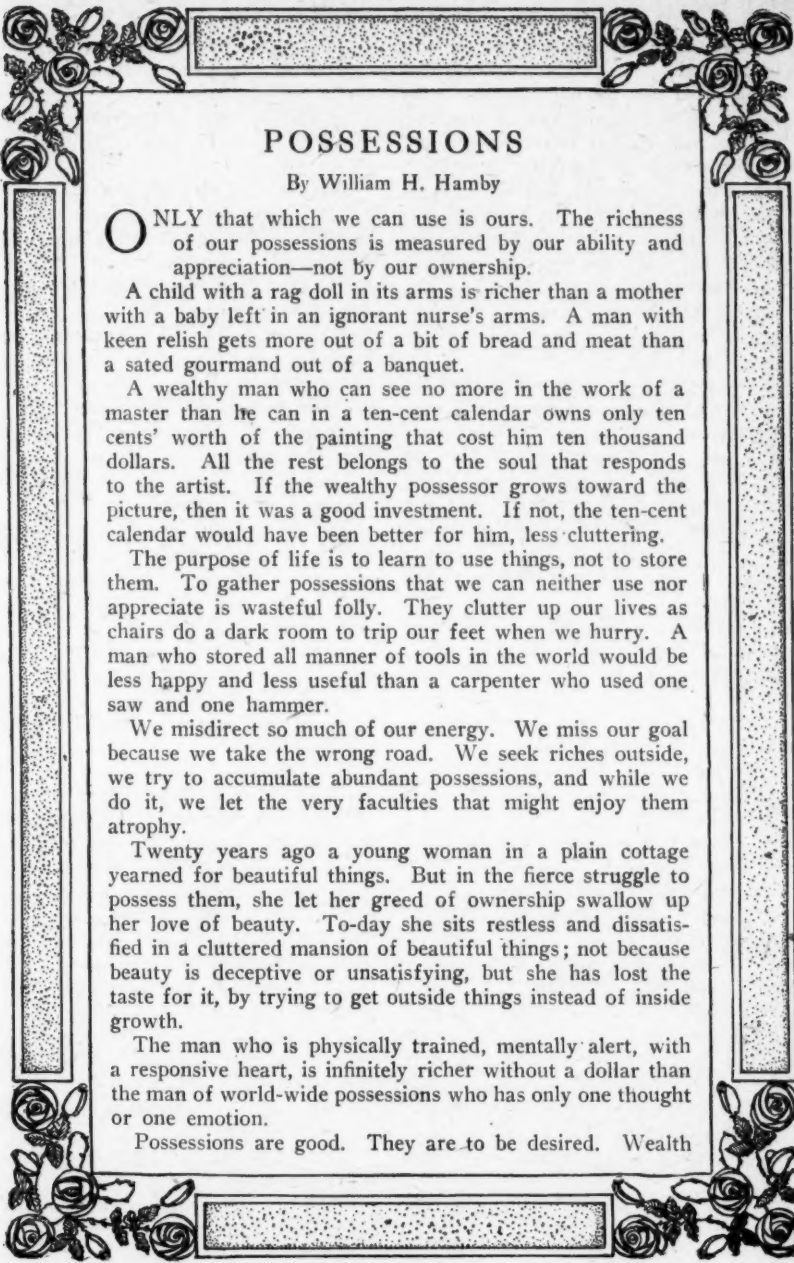
"It stood just beyond the deanery gardens, didn't it?" interrupted Anne.

"But the other tower was different," went on Macraven. "It was made of ivory, tall and fragile and slender. And it always seemed to me a tower of dreams, the home of beauty and aspiration. But now I know there can and should be only one tower in every man's life. It must be of granite beneath—it must be bedded on actualities—but it should be tipped with the fairest of ivory—crowned and beautified, I mean, with young-heartedness and happiness."

"What made you think of that?" she asked.

"It was you who taught it to me," was his answer.

"Silly!" she murmured happily, against his supporting shoulder.



## POSSESSIONS

By William H. Hamby

ONLY that which we can use is ours. The richness of our possessions is measured by our ability and appreciation—not by our ownership.

A child with a rag doll in its arms is richer than a mother with a baby left in an ignorant nurse's arms. A man with keen relish gets more out of a bit of bread and meat than a sated gourmand out of a banquet.

A wealthy man who can see no more in the work of a master than he can in a ten-cent calendar owns only ten cents' worth of the painting that cost him ten thousand dollars. All the rest belongs to the soul that responds to the artist. If the wealthy possessor grows toward the picture, then it was a good investment. If not, the ten-cent calendar would have been better for him, less cluttering.

The purpose of life is to learn to use things, not to store them. To gather possessions that we can neither use nor appreciate is wasteful folly. They clutter up our lives as chairs do a dark room to trip our feet when we hurry. A man who stored all manner of tools in the world would be less happy and less useful than a carpenter who used one saw and one hammer.

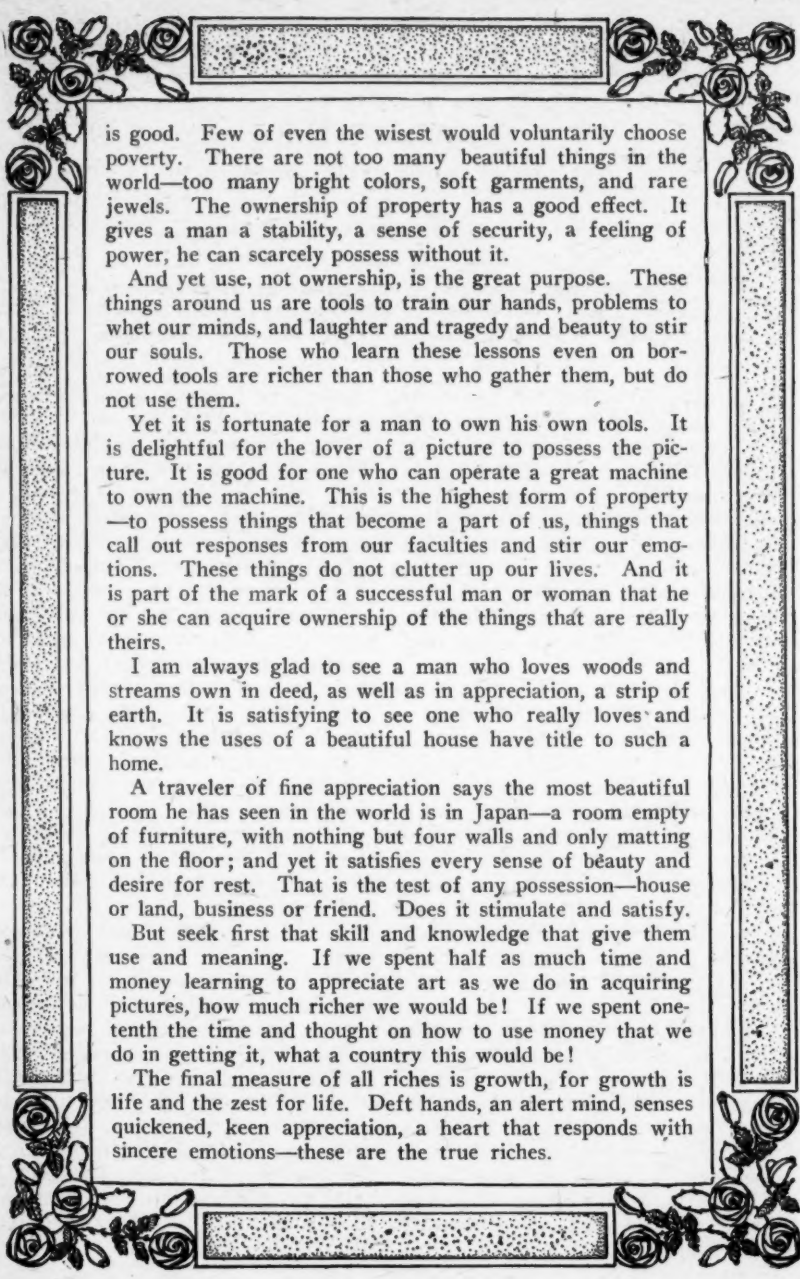
We misdirect so much of our energy. We miss our goal because we take the wrong road. We seek riches outside, we try to accumulate abundant possessions, and while we do it, we let the very faculties that might enjoy them atrophy.

Twenty years ago a young woman in a plain cottage yearned for beautiful things. But in the fierce struggle to possess them, she let her greed of ownership swallow up her love of beauty. To-day she sits restless and dissatisfied in a cluttered mansion of beautiful things; not because beauty is deceptive or unsatisfying, but she has lost the taste for it, by trying to get outside things instead of inside growth.

The man who is physically trained, mentally alert, with a responsive heart, is infinitely richer without a dollar than the man of world-wide possessions who has only one thought or one emotion.

Possessions are good. They are to be desired. Wealth





is good. Few of even the wisest would voluntarily choose poverty. There are not too many beautiful things in the world—too many bright colors, soft garments, and rare jewels. The ownership of property has a good effect. It gives a man a stability, a sense of security, a feeling of power, he can scarcely possess without it.

And yet use, not ownership, is the great purpose. These things around us are tools to train our hands, problems to whet our minds, and laughter and tragedy and beauty to stir our souls. Those who learn these lessons even on borrowed tools are richer than those who gather them, but do not use them.

Yet it is fortunate for a man to own his own tools. It is delightful for the lover of a picture to possess the picture. It is good for one who can operate a great machine to own the machine. This is the highest form of property—to possess things that become a part of us, things that call out responses from our faculties and stir our emotions. These things do not clutter up our lives. And it is part of the mark of a successful man or woman that he or she can acquire ownership of the things that are really theirs.

I am always glad to see a man who loves woods and streams own in deed, as well as in appreciation, a strip of earth. It is satisfying to see one who really loves and knows the uses of a beautiful house have title to such a home.

A traveler of fine appreciation says the most beautiful room he has seen in the world is in Japan—a room empty of furniture, with nothing but four walls and only matting on the floor; and yet it satisfies every sense of beauty and desire for rest. That is the test of any possession—house or land, business or friend. Does it stimulate and satisfy.

But seek first that skill and knowledge that give them use and meaning. If we spent half as much time and money learning to appreciate art as we do in acquiring pictures, how much richer we would be! If we spent one-tenth the time and thought on how to use money that we do in getting it, what a country this would be!

The final measure of all riches is growth, for growth is life and the zest for life. Deft hands, an alert mind, senses quickened, keen appreciation, a heart that responds with sincere emotions—these are the true riches.



# Bridging a Distance

By Marion Hill

Author of "Against the Wall," "Morality," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

We believe there are few who will not understand the conflict in this woman's heart. This is the type of story we like especially to give to the readers of SMITH'S because it is real, vital, and means something.

ON a comfortably hot September day, when the fall pippins were turning from jade to gold, and the sun distilled odors of sweet wine from the hidden wild grapes on lane fences, there wandered back into the Pennsylvania mountains, after an ungranted leave of absence from home of two years, a tall, likable-looking man whose worst vice was undue cheerfulness and whose curse was a contented spirit.

Where the main road—whose dust was thick as velvet underfoot—branches windingly off to Tobyhanna, he left it and took a clean hilly track that lifts itself through forests to the lonely, flat-rocked gorges amid which the young Lehigh River crashes and carries on wholly for its own private amusement; and he quite solaced himself for the lack of company afforded by the automobiles by plucking and chewing a sprig of wintergreen, tough as only September wintergreen knows how to be.

"I haven't tasted a piece of you since I left," he audibly informed the resisting herb, somewhat explaining to it his reason for masticating it so ritualistically.

There had been no wintergreen in Cripple Creek. Nor, for Tom Lynn, had there been much of anything else, either, if his discouraged-looking

clothes and hollow-chested gripsack were witnesses to be believed.

When, temporarily emerging from the woods, he came out upon a familiar bare eminence known as "Blazzer Rock," a peak commanding a good view of the surrounding vales and dells, Lynn straightened himself more or less nervously, and scanned a low-lying bushy depth for his own roof peak. For the first time, he began to remember that those silent two years might have wrought a change or two. Also—though in a generally impersonal way—he granted that a man who leaves a young wife without her express permission is apt to return still minus that desirable commodity.

At first he fancied that the house had taken flight, because he could not immediately see it in the old hollow. But finally there it was in its usual place, evidenced by the thin trail of smoke rising above the apple trees. The apple trees had grown a bit, hiding it and shading it more than they used. Even a tree will change in two years.

The smoke was vaguely reassuring. Some one still lived there. Lynn went on down into the valley and stood at last before his own gate. The lilac bushes were taller than he remembered them, but the gate was still without a latch, was still held in place by an iron hoop connecting its palings with the

palings of the sagging fence. When material things remain the same, the augury is good. A mended gate would have given Tom Lynn a shock by suggesting a new tenant.

He entered the yard, and felt a symbolic thrill of being harbored as he hooped himself off from the outside world. He dutifully went past the front door. In that part of Pennsylvania, no man gets in at the front door except the minister and the doctor. He followed the flat stones around to the back porch where a piece of rag carpet was laid in waiting for the first mud of the visiting foot.

The look of the back porch clinched things. The place was home. There were the two old chairs, the table with the washbasin, the empty bird cage hanging from the roof, the earth-caked soap box in which the tomato seeds were started every year.

Tom went into the kitchen.

"Hullo, pap," he said casually.

"Pap" was Toby Getz, his wife's father. And pap was in his usual hickory rocker beside the kitchen stove. Pap had reached that ripeness of years when he no longer had to wear a collar, not even at church. The peace of that venerable point of life was apparent in his face, which, though shriveled as a last year's apple, owned not a furrow that indicated fretfulness.

"Good Lord of Peter," he now piously ejaculated, rising tottering and showering to the floor a plentiful rain of tobacco, "if 'tain't Tom!"

"Tom it is," corroborated Lynn, wisely refusing to let go of the casual. He put his hand bag on the floor, where it promptly fell over on its side from general debility, and clasped the old man's knubbly fingers, pressing him gently back into the hickory rocker. "What's the news?"

"The durned old thing won't draw," quavered Getz, shakingly picking up a

corncob pipe. "I've sucked at it till I'm empty as a gourd."

"Hand it over," ordered Tom, straddling a near-by chair. "I generally could get it to work."

"And you're the only one," said the old man, raising his voice a trifle, as if hoping that it might reach a needed quarter. "The only one. I give it over to Ianthy, and what do you suppose she done? Tuck it outside to the pump and let a spill of water run through it till it swole!"

"How—is she?" presently asked Tom, repocketing his knife, putting the bowl back upon its handle, and returning the restored treasure to the owner.

"How can I tell till I've drawed on her?" rather reproachfully asked pap.

"I mean Ianthy."

"Oh, Ianthy. Well, she ain't so peppery as she was—now she's got her divorce."

"Her divorce——" Tom Lynn slowly unstraddled his chair and rose to his lank height. He picked up his cap. "From me?"

"Now, who else could she get a divorce from?" asked the old man testily. "'Tain't like you to ask sech dumb questions, Tom."

"Why did she need a divorce?" asked Lynn. His rugged face was working. "When I wasn't a mite of trouble to her—nor expense! Not a mite. When I haven't even been near for two years!"

"I dunno," said pap, giving it up. Then, radiantly, "Mebbe she thought you wasn't never coming back."

"Never coming back!" repeated Lynn scornfully. "Why, I didn't leave any word saying I wasn't coming back, did I?"

"That's so, you didn't," pacifically remembered pap, thumbing a fearful amount of tobacco into his pipe. "Never no sort of word."

Here one of the inside doors of the kitchen was flung furiously open, and



"Don't you come near me!" she forbade indignantly. "I'm nothing to you now."

Ianthy stepped into the scene. She had been combing her hair. She had the comb still in her clenched hand, and her hair hung about her shoulders as it used to do at picnics, when she was fifteen years old and Tom Lynn found out she was the prettiest girl in the county.

He now made a quick move to her. "Ianthy——"

"Don't you come near me!" she forbade indignantly. "I'm nothing to you now."

"Put it the other way, Ianthy, and say *I'm* nothing to *you*. Don't undertake to speak for me. I can speak for myself."

"But you won't find anything to say!" she flung back. Two pink spots burned in her cheeks. She was one of the very few women who grow pretty when angry. "Suppose you try. Suppose you tell me what brings you here."

"You."

The one unadorned word came with terrible weight. But she only laughed hysterically and scoffingly.

"Then suppose you tell me what made you go away!" she cried, flinging her hair from her face.

"You."

In the complete silence that followed this brief accusation, Pap Getz, after painfully "skreaking" a match several impotent times against his chair rung, finally ignited it with a crack and a flash as alarming as a streak of lightning.

"Oh, yes, blame me! I might have expected it, from such as you, Tom Lynn!" said Ianthy, bursting into scorching flame simultaneously with the match. "Since you let me bear the burden of everything else, load on the blame, too. I can carry it. I've had practice enough. I was to blame in the

beginning? That's true. I was to blame for ever marrying you. When you used to hang about our place night and day, I might have guessed it was laziness, but I didn't. Foollike, I took it to prove that you were fond of me. And after marrying, I found out that 'hanging about' was all you could do. You put more and more on me. First, I had to spade the garden patch, and weed it, and draw water, and split kindling. Next, I had to plant the potatoes and the field corn——"

"You got there first. I'd have done it." He spoke quietly, examining the torn lining of his cap, turning that sorry article around and around in his hands.

"Yes, you'd have done it—in the middle of next year! Don't you suppose I know you by now? Look at that window. It falls down every time it's put up, just as it did three years ago, when we rented this place. But the night we moved in it, I asked you to fix it. Same way with the gate. Same way with everything. What was the good of my working and earning and saving? None. You couldn't even pay the four-year lease on this farm by yourself, but had to call on me for my butter-and-egg money——"

"I wasn't so awful well that season, Ianthy. You told the minister you took me for worse the same as for better, in sickness the same as in health, but there you—lied, Ianthy."

"Pap," she cried passionately, "are you going to sit there and have Tom Lynn name me a liar?"

"No, sirree," quite squealed the old man, sucking violently on the now efficient corncob. "But he hain't named you one yet. Tom only said you lied, and sounds like you done it, don't it now, Ianthy?"

"You always took his part," she said, with a dry sob. "I've ever had to do my own battling. I'm so tired of it, so tired of it!"

"Already?" questioned her former

husband, smiling wryly into his cap. "How long have you had your—your divorce, Ianthy? And how comes it that I didn't have to get mine at the same time? It took the two of us to get married, Ianthy, down in the little church that the boys and girls trimmed up with mountain laurel. How comes it that only one of us is needed for a divorce?"

"You can answer that as well as ask it," she cried, seizing the ends of her hair and combing fiercely. "You were summoned, all right. Where were you? That's the whole point. Where were you?"

"Yep," said pap, leaning forward entertainedly. "Where wuz you, Tommy? Tell a feller. I hain't been tol' nothing to amoose me since you hiked out."

"I'll tell you now that you want to know," said Lynn, talking to the woman only. "You remember—that night I lit out—we'd had a slice of ham, wrapped up in a piece of newspaper, sent us from the store?"

"Durn the luck, no, I don't!" acknowledged pap sadly. He evidently felt that his loss of memory concerning the ham would cost him the story. "Durn the luck, I don't! Ham, wuz it? I reckon that's the last piece of store meat in the house. We hain't had much meat since you been gone, Tommy, son."

"I've forgotten the ham, too," scoffed Ianthy, a new flash coming into her dark eyes. "You've a fine memory for things to forget, Tom Lynn! Or maybe you can't hold two thoughts in your head at once? Was it remembering the ham that made you forget us—me, I mean?" She made the correction quickly, glancing rather apprehensively over her shoulder at the room she had lately left.

"I remembered you, Ianthy. Aren't I here now, where I don't belong any more, to prove it? And I remember the ham because of the newspaper. I

sat at the table yonder, reading that scrap of paper, while you were frying the ham, Ianthy. You were all tucked out that evening, and you looked peaked and kind of different; and I was sorrier for you than I'd ever been, thinking how much you'd wanted me to rent Miller's big farm down on the main road, where you could see folks go by and have running water in the kitchen. But I couldn't pay for it—not even helped out by your butter-and-egg money. I've kept a note of that money, Ianthy, and I'll send it back to you mighty soon after I leave. I'll be leaving in a minute."

"Shucks!" said pap, very dissuadingly. "What sort of behavior's that, Tommy, going as soon as you git here?"

"He'd better go," threatened Ianthy, quick fear showing on her face.

"Oh, I'm going," said Lynn composedly. "There isn't much more to tell. In that paper was a tale of a man who'd come back from Cripple Creek with a bag of gold. And I—I tried to do the same. That's all."

His somber eyes fell rather pathetically upon the lean gripsack upon the floor.

"You found out you had to *work* anywhere you went, heh? Anywhere but at home. So you came back. Well, you came back too late!" said she.

"Yes, I see that," admitted Lynn. "Or too soon. The two things act very much the same sometimes." He picked up his gripsack, opened it, and peered thoughtfully into its yawning mouth. "Did I leave anything like a change of clothes, Ianthy?" he asked respectfully. "I'd be thankful for them, to take away with me."

"Ding it, Ianthy!" said pap, striking his thin knee with a weak fist. "I tol' you you hadn't no right to sell Tom's clothes to that traveling Jew man!"

"So you cleared me out, bag and baggage, Ianthy, girl, didn't you? And I paid half the rent," mused Lynn, shut-

ting his gripsack. "Well, good-by. But let me tell you this. I want you to remember it. I've been faithful true to you the whole two years. There! Take that to your heart, Ianthy. It's my parting present to you."

"Oh, I can make you a present of the same sort," she said bitterly.

"Not the same, Ianthy," he said, shaking his head thoughtfully. "Not the same. Coming from a man like me, it's a—a bigger present than you think for. And some day it will count with you. Some day. Good-by, pap. Good-by, Ianthy. I've a good deal of walking to do before night falls. I think you'll be sorry for this, Ianthy."

He opened the door and looked out at the mountains, around whose wooded bases the shadows of evening were already creeping, though their tops were in brightest sun.

"Sorry?" she asked, ironically and hysterically. "When?"

"When the laurel comes in flower."

She dropped the comb to the floor with a clatter and stood tugging at the strands of her long hair. Pap struggled painfully to his cramped legs.

"Quit funning and set down a spell, Tom," he urged.

"I wouldn't stay another minute, not for a million dollars," said Lynn gently.

Just as he turned to step outside, there came a peculiar series of sounds from the inner bedroom. There might have been a young pigeon there—a pigeon that was cheerful and owned a contented mind.

"Urrr-goo! Ur-goo!" went this nested bird. It waited a reasonable length of time and then asked questioningly, in a shrill chirp, "Ah?"

Lynn set his gripsack softly to the floor, placed his cap upon it, then pushed the door shut. His hand was shaking, and his colorless face was a tragic study. His indolent body was drawn to its full height.

"Whose child?" he asked quietly.





"You stop!" commanded Ianthy, trembling with helpless anger. "He's mine!"

"Yours," said Toby Getz. "Shucks, forgot you didn't know."

"Mine!" said Ianthy, like a tigress. The judge gave him to me. To me!" She ran to the bedroom door and clutched the knob tightly. "I proved that I could support him and that you couldn't. You keep out of this bedroom, Tom Lynn! The boy's mine and the room's mine!"

"You only own half of either of 'em," mentioned Lynn. He reached the bedroom door with two strides and put his big bony hand over the little one that still clutched the knob.

"Pap! Help!" she screamed.

But-pap, thriftily harvesting tobacco

from his own front creases, merely observed:

"Help keep Tom from having a look at his own baby? I ain't no sech fool, Ianthy."

Ianthy screamed again as Lynn twisted the door open. Then all three were silent—looking in at the disclosed picture. Standing up in the box of a homemade cradle was a vigorous, beaming boy baby, some seventeen months old. Had the baby been a girl, it would have been walking and talking by now; but, being a boy—and the superior animals have the longer term of infancy—it could only goo and go flop at unexpected times. This was an unexpected

time. Seeing the stranger and promptly taking a fancy to the size and evident strength of him, the baby lurched against the side of the poorly constructed cradle and pitched headforward to the floor, taking the roughness of fate very philosophically, only asking, "Ah?" poignantly.

Barricading the mother with one sufficient arm, Lynn picked up the child and surveyed it intently and long.

"Well, you're pretty much of a scalawag," he told it finally. Lynn's breast was heaving like a machine, and the dew of perspiration was visible on his forehead. "You've got your daddy's curly hair, haven't you, and your daddy's blue eyes? But you've got your mother's strong chin, and I guess you're better off with it than without it. Here's your daddy's first kiss, scalawag."

The scalawag dithered and squirmed ecstatically, enjoying the powerfulness of the new arms, and taking immediately to the musical rumble of the deep new voice. It had had a surfeit of soprano—male and female.

"Urrrr!" cooed the baby, in a veritable Hallelujah chorus.

"Say 'dadda,'" experimented Lynn, intensely interested. He sat himself upon the kitchen table and perched the baby upon his crossed knee. He was honestly oblivious of everybody else. "Dadda."

"Ah?" asked the scalawag, imitative as a mocking bird. "Ah?"

"Dadda."

"You stop!" commanded Ianthy, trembling with helpless anger. "He's mine!"

"More than mine?" asked Lynn, suddenly fierce and suspicious. "You've only to say so and——"

The young mother met the jealous glare with a sarcastic, clear-eyed gaze that sufficiently illuminated *that* issue.

"Well, then," said Tom Lynn, gentle again, "what shall I teach him to say

if not 'dadda'? You wouldn't want him to call me 'Mr. Lynn,' would you, Ianthy, girl?"

"I want you to put him down and leave him," she said passionately. "Do as you did before he was born—turn your back on him, desert him! You left me to bear him in grief and loneliness—an abandoned wife and mother. You left me to rear him and support him. And now, when he's grown to be a happiness to me, you want to share him! What right have you?"

"You've named the right, Ianthy. Because I *didn't* have him before—wasn't even told that he was coming. Why wasn't I?"

"Oh, I was carrying *all* the burdens without talking of them," she answered, twisting her small hands rebelliously. "Why not this, too?"

"When was he born?" asked Lynn somberly. "How soon after I—left?"

"Seven months, Tommy," croaked old Father Time equally.

"I see now why you looked so sort of worn out and hopeless—that night. Poor girl, poor little Ianthy, girl," mused Lynn. "If you'd only have told—what it was my due—as God is over us—my due to know."

"It's easy enough to talk, and at this end of the thing, too! It was always easy enough for you to *talk*!" she lashed out. "Did you ever *do* anything? No! Will talk put clothes on a child's back, or food in his little mouth? And if I'd been in the wrong, would the judge have given me my case, given me back my old name, given me my baby, for my own? No! All I had to do was to tell him the truth, and I won!"

"If you'd talked a little more to me and less to the judge, you'd have been fairer to our child!" said Lynn, crashing his fist down on the table. "A woman that turns a baby into a half orphan before its time is taking an awful responsibility, Ianthy; and I'd

sooner be me than you at the Last Day!"

The crashing fist amused the baby mightily, jarring loose its coy tongue.

"Ad-da!" it vouchsafed triumphantly. "Adda. Dadda." It butted its soft curls into Lynn's shabby coat and smiled roguishly up at him.

Tears glittered suddenly in the man's tired eyes. He kissed the curls as a penitent kisses the shrine.

"Dadda!" chirped the mocking bird, reveling in the new note. "Dadda, dadda, dadda!"

"Hain't he smart?" asked Toby Getz perfunctorily. Having weathered through many series of grandchildren, he knew the formula for this occasion. "He doesn't call his mother nothing but 'Anty.' Comes of hearing 'Ianthy.' She's tried to make him say 'marma,' but he's as sot on his own way as she is."

"Anty," chirped the mocking bird, holding out his tiny hands to her.

She clutched him swiftly, and sat down in a chair with him, kissing him and cuddling his hands and toes, as if he had been lost and was now found. Her breast was in quick commotion. She might have been running a race with death, from the appearance of her. She kept her eyes warily upon the man who so easily had surrendered the child to her, watching him with fear and distrust.

For he picked his cap from the floor and hung it upon its old nail in the door. Then he picked up his gripsack, looked around as if to refresh his memory in regard to the family limbo for trash, recalled it, and slung the lean portmanteau out of sight among the discarded kettles on the top shelf of the pot closet behind the stove.

"What are you doing?" asked the woman in a frightened whisper.

"Making myself to home," answered Lynn meaningly.

"You mustn't! You can't! I'm

Ianthy Getz! I've got my divorce!" she stammered excitedly. She tried to rise, but sank back in the chair, borne down by the weight of the heavy baby.

"Keep your divorce," said Lynn. "I'm not taking it from you, am I? But where my little son is is my home. Understand that."

"He's not your son according to law, Tom Lynn! Look at the law papers I have, and find out! He's mine! The judge gave him to me."

"How could he give what he didn't have? Suppose you went out of the house to gather eggs, and when you came back with them, I told you I'd given your pap to the King of England—wouldn't you ask me how I'd done it?"

Toby Getz impotently slapped his shriveled thigh and cackled appreciatively. The afternoon session had been as entertaining as the weekly newspaper.

"Set down, Tommy, and we'll have a chat," he quavered. "I'm glad you've changed your mind. You're a master hand at changing your mind. How long's you going to stay this time, Tommy?"

Ianthy suspended her breath to hear the answer.

"Long enough to teach my son to call his mother 'marma,' I reckon," answered Lynn, looking at her intently.

"Set down and hev a smoke and a chat," invited pap. "It's time Ianthy fotched home the cow, anyhow," he hinted broadly. He evidently had intimate things to say.

But Lynn had on his cap again.

"Where is the cow?" he asked. "I'll fetch her. That's my job."

Here Ianthy dropped her head upon the chair back, laughing, laughing in awful hysteria. Her hair covered the baby, and he peeped through it, also laughing.

"Why wasn't it your job two years



He waddled on all fours to the stag party and joined it for keeps, climbing riotously to his father's lap.

ago, Tom Lynn?" she asked, driving home the irony like a dagger.

"Because you didn't have a baby in your lap two years ago, Ianthy," he answered. "Where did you say the cow was, pap?"

"In the high huckleberry medder, Tommy."

"I reckon the traveling Jew man's got my snare wire, too," said Tom Lynn darkly, but—to the initiated—not irrelevantly.

For a fish stream ran through the high huckleberry meadow.

"There's wire outside on the porch, Tommy," said the old man, his mouth watering. "But—but the season's well over."

"To a man as hungry as I, trout eats as good out of season as in," said Tom Lynn simply. Then he went.

"Don't you bet he catches some, Ianthy?" asked Toby Getz, rubbing his withered palms together and smiling anticipatively.

But Ianthy was not betting. She put the baby down in a corner of the rag-carpeted floor, fenced him in with chairs laid on their sides, gave him some spools to play with, and then mechanically set about the supper preparations. She sat down on the oilcloth before the stove and sliced a stick into kindling with the bread knife.

"Why don't you leave that for Tom?" asked her father.

"Let me forget his name for a minute!" she said fiercely. "I'm sick of it! Sick of it!" The very loathing made her go further with it. "And did you ever see him cut kindling? Ever in his worthless life?"

"No," admitted the old man. "And I never see him go fotch the cow afore either. But he's a-doing of it now."

She laid the fire and started it, going outside often for the wood, able to carry in only a few logs at a time. The old man smoked, the baby played, and the woman worked—all three in silence. Then when the setting sun filled the room with glory, hinting, too, that it would soon be gone and that the barn would be dark, she went out with a pan of scraps to feed the chickens.

The old man looked long at the baby. Finally, getting its eye, he asked it in a cautious whisper:

"What kind of hell do you reckon we're all a-going to hev to-night?"

"Ah?" chirruped the baby engagingly. "Dadda!"

"Yep, sirree," answered the old man. "That's just who I'm a-thinking of. You're a smart un."

Here Ianthy came flying back into the kitchen, with the angry pink again in her pale cheeks. Out in the barn a man was heard making those warningly guttural sounds that go only with the milking of a cow.

Ianthy knotted up her hair and put biscuits into the oven. She brewed a pot of tea and fried potatoes. Then she set the table, laying a place for herself, a place for her father, and a place for her baby. In the center of the table she put a dish of apple sauce.

Lynn came in with a pail of strained milk. He carried it to the buttery and left it there. From that point, milk was woman's work, the county over.

"Here, scalawag," he then said, and tossed an oriole's discarded nest into the baby's lap.

He had a bunch of cardinal flowers in his hand which he put into a glass of water. About to set them on the supper table, he saw the two plates and the baby's bowl. He held the bouquet aloft in a slightly unsteady hand.

"I wouldn't have done that to you,

Ianthy," he said at last. "If ever you'd gone away and come back to me heart-sick and hungry, I'd have given you your old seat—as God hears me, I would."

He took the bouquet to a little side table by a window, and placed the flowers upon it, placing, top, a plate and a knife and fork.

"What did you catch?" asked the old man anxiously.

"Two," answered Lynn, bringing them in from the porch, all ready for the pan. He put a greased skillet on the fire and cooked the trout for himself. Then he dished them out upon his plate and dipped himself a glass of milk.

"Come, pap," said Ianthy briskly. She put the baby in his high chair and took her own seat.

Toby Getz slowly sat down and eyed the hot biscuits, the apple sauce, the tea, and the fragrant fried potatoes, with small satisfaction.

In isolation, Tom Lynn sat down to his trout.

"Ding it, Ianthy, I want some fish!" burst out pap, almost crying. "I hain't smelled nothing nicer in a coon's age!"

"Why, come on. You're welcome," said Lynn, reaching out and hauling a second chair to his side table.

Delighted, the old man tottered over and sat down to the unusual treat of fresh brook trout.

Then the scalawag thinned himself, by some process known best to infants, and slid from the confines of the high chair. He waddled on all fours to the stag party and joined it for keeps, climbing riotously to his father's lap.

Ianthy put her uneaten hot biscuit back upon her plate, and sat alone, with her head resting upon her hand. The whole feast was hers, but her appetite for it was gone.

"This is no more right than it was before," said Lynn. "Ianthy, I didn't aim to do it. Old folks and young



folks mostly take to me; and dogs, and dumb animals generally; and girls, too—if I'd let 'em, even when I don't hoist my finger. But this isn't right, the way it is. So we'll all come over to your table, Ianthy. And if I'm not too proud to eat some biscuits, you shouldn't be too proud to eat some fish."

While talking, he had effected the change, and the meal proceeded to a fairly normal close. Then it was dark and the lamps were lit. Ianthy washed the dishes and watched the clock. Its hands crept round to bedtime.

"Pap," she said, going to him suddenly and kneeling beseechingly beside him, "pap, he's driving me from the only home I have. Come with me. I'm going to take the baby and go somewhere. I don't know where, but somewhere. Come with me!"

"Shucks, be you crazy?" he asked, in a high quaver. "It's high time I wuz to bed, and I'm a-going there right now. Good night, Tom. See that the place is locked up good, won't you, boy?"

"There won't be much need for locking, pap," Lynn answered. "I'll play watchdog from now on. I'll sleep here." He pointed to a lumpy horse-hair sofa against the kitchen wall.

"Suit yourself," said pap, grandly indifferent. "Suit yourself."

"And if you go anywhere, Ianthy," said Lynn, after the old man had left the room, "you'll go without the baby. Suit yourself."

"You're staying where you've no more right than—than the dog you said you were!" she panted.

She lifted the child, which lay sleeping on the floor, and carried it into her bedroom, placing it in its crib. Then she came out, and after a furtive look at the lock of her room door, which had no key, went unostentatiously to the buttery door and stealthily abstracted the key from that. With it hidden in her hand, she made an attempt to go back to her room.

But the man barred her way and held her up. He caught her hand, twisted the key from it without much ceremony, and flung the bit of brass clatteringly behind the stove.

"What do you mean by that, you—you coward?" she asked shrinkingly.

"Only that Ianthy Getz never had to lock a door against Tom Lynn," he answered proudly. "So why now? Go in there and go to sleep."

She drew a deep breath and drooped her head wearily. Outside the whippoorwill was calling; calling.

"Listen to it," said Lynn, gripping his chest over his heart. "I've waited two years to hear it, thinking it would mean wife and home. My God, but it's a sad-sounding song, isn't it, Ianthy?"

"Why didn't you write?" she asked in a gasp.

"I vowed I'd make my pile first," he answered, with an unconscious glance toward the cupboard where the pathetically flat gripsack lay hidden. "But it's no good raking over the past. Everything's too late. Go in and go to sleep. You take the lamp, Ianthy. I'm used to being in the dark."

And all night the whippoorwill called; he heard it. And all night, too, the distant Lehigh River, unnoticed in the cabin by day, moaned constantly as it tossed and rolled on its rocky bed.

In the morning, when Ianthy stepped into the kitchen, doors and windows were breezily open, and a fire was roaringly awaiting her. A neat stack of kindling and a compact block of logs were back of the kitchen stove. The buttery key was in its lock. A pail of new milk proved that the cow had been milked. The lowered bars of the barnyard proved that she was already on her way to the high huckleberry meadow.

For breakfast, Lynn brought back young squirrel meat.

"Say, but we're beginning to live like

folks, ding it!" said pap, gratefully mumbling the tender bones.

After feeding himself, the old man fed his pipe and became communicative.

"Tommy, that divorce court was better nor a circus," he stated. "I wish you could ha' been there."

"I wish so, too," said Tom Lynn, carefully swinging the overjoyed scalawag on the toe of his boot.

"They said I wuz the best witness for the prosecootion," admitted pap proudly.

"Well, that's natural," acknowledged Lynn, after thinking the statement over. "Though I could have sworn you'd be on my side."

"Didn't I say I was?" demanded pap. "You was the prosecooted, wasn't you—being talked of behind your back? Course I spoke on your side. I sez, 'Judge,' sez I, 'that Tom Lynn is the easiest-going feller and the patientest as ever I see.'"

"I think I *am* patient," said Lynn moodily. He said it looking into Ianthy's eyes, catching them darkly upon him from where she stood in the buttery, skimming cream from earthen bowls.

"Jes' as I tole judge. 'Judge,' I sez, 'he could sit longer catching no fish and not getting riled than any man I ever knowed—in good haying weather, too.' And I tole him you wuz a home-loving man."

"And how did you prove that?" asked Lynn dryly.

"I sez, 'Judge, I've seen that Tom Lynn stick to the house, reading a noospaper, even when there was a crop to be dug.'"

"Ah!" said Lynn thoughtfully. He stopped swinging his boot and the disgusted scalawag crawled off to find better amusement.

"And I sez, 'Judge he was thoughtful of his wife. When wood was needed, I've seen Tom Lynn kick out a

rotten fence post and bring it home, 'cause it was easier for her to split nor a green one.'"

"The skunk I was!" observed Lynn. "No wonder you're crying for shame of him who used to be your man, Ianthy."

For her head was leaned back against the frame of the buttery window, and big tears dripped from her lowered lashes. At his words to her, she dashed the tears away with the back of her hand and went on working.

Then the scalawag effected a complete diversion. He had pulled himself up by the kitchen sill, so as to be able to look out at the chickens, when the sash came crashing down. The fact that he simultaneously sat thump on the floor was all that saved his flower-like little hands from being crushed.

Swallowing an oath, Lynn strode out for the tool box, came back with it, and soon had the window casing in a dozen pieces. By the time they were in place again, that sash went up to stay up, and came down without flurry.

"Next thing you know, some fool will leave the hoop off the gate, and this child will roll down into the gully," Lynn remarked to the atmosphere, as he went outside with the tool box.

So he worked all day at the front fence, and by evening had persuaded the gate to swing shut instead of swinging open, when left to its own sweet will.

The next few days he devoted himself to making a substantial crib bed to take the place of the tippable cradle. And *every* day he brought fresh flowers to the table and fresh meat to the pot.

"Tommy, don't you think she's looking better nor she did?" asked pap one morning, when Ianthy came into the room with her hair prettily fixed and wearing her second-best dress.

Before Lynn could reply, she went out into the yard, slapping the door smartly to.

"She acts as skittish as if she's begun

setting her cap at some un," commented pap, wincing at the bang.

"*What?*" growled Lynn thickly.

"She's a good cook and a pretty girl yet," championed the old man stubbornly; adding shrewdly, "And I didn't think *you'd* be one to counsel a young thing to try to live continual without a mate."

The next morning Lynn disappeared when the cow did. At least he did not come back for breakfast. Dinner went by without him, too. There were no wild asters on the table that day, nor was there rabbit for a stew. Pap spilled twice as much tobacco as he smoked and smoked twice as much as he should. The scalawag, unusually solemn, went often to the door and shrieked an unanswered "Ah?" into the mountain gorges. That afternoon he had a crying spell; a rare and distressing rite with him, amounting almost to illness.

"He misses his dad, Ianthy," said pap, shaking his head woefully.

"Why should he?" she demanded sharply. "Why should he miss a father when he's never had one?"

"Don't you miss him, too?" asked pap artlessly. "You've been running 'twixt here and the front door all day, wondering if 'twuz going to rain. Shucks, the house sounds emptier nor a new coffin!"

Then the cow came home, and the man behind the cow.

"Ah!" crowed the scalawag, beating a heel tattoo upon the rag carpet as Lynn came into the room.

"Ding it, Tom," said pap, breathing gusts of relief, "I didn't know but what you'd Cripple Cricked again!"

"I've been to town," explained Lynn, rather insufficiently. From a bundle he took some toys, real toys. And there was joy in the scalawag's lair.

Ianthy hummed a little song as she put the supper biscuits into the oven.

Before they were done, a visitor came. She was Beulah Hinkle, a

rather overblown and undeniably overbold beauty. She lived on the other side of the mountain, and stopped as she drove by, stepping around to the back door, as befits a good neighbor, even a distant one.

"No, I won't come in," she said, answering Ianthy, but looking smilingly at Lynn in the manner of her kind, who never see a man without cultivating him a bit—stirring up the earth around his roots, so to speak.

Ianthy made all the proper inquiries about relatives, and gave all the proper replies in turn.

"Well, I must be leaving," announced Beulah. "Are you going to the dance at the cider mill to-night, Ianthy Getz?"

"Maybe," remarked Ianthy, setting her soft lips together.

"Are you?" asked Lynn, of the visitor.

"You bet!" answered Beulah, pouring one of her lavish smiles over him. Then she added, as a pointed afterthought, "Unless some good-looking man comes to sit up with me a piece to-night."

"I smell my biscuits burning. I'll have to go in," said Ianthy, disappearing.

After helping Beulah into her buckboard—a performance entailing many bursts of high laughter and a few deep guffaws—Tom Lynn remained out on the back stoop to shave himself, whistling freely all the time.

He hurried through supper, then betook himself into pap's room with his bundle, coming out shortly after in a new suit of clothes. After one look at the transformation, Ianthy set down the cup she was wiping and laid the towel over the back of a chair.

"I *am* going to the dance," she said, flinging up her head.

"Don't forget to take your baby with you," said Lynn imperturbably, "for I won't be here to watch it."

She started to run into her room as if to dress. But she could not cross the threshold. A lasso seemed to be around her ankles, pulling her to the side of the extremely well-arrayed man.

"Tom Lynn," she said huskily, when she laggingly got there, "Tom, *where* are you going?"

"Going to sit up a piece with Beulah Hinkle," he answered shortly.

Now, in that neighborhood, when a marriageable girl lets a marrying man "sit up with her a piece," she is permitted, even by the most rigid propriety, herself to sit upon a piece of the man. For what else is his knee?

Realizing much in a flash, Ianthy dropped into a chair as if shot. Then her head fell forward on the table and she lay there sobbing.

"Shucks!" mumbled pap, disapproving of the noise.

But he might as well have been out of the room, for all the other two thought of him.

"Ianthy," said Lynn slowly, "if a man can't have the wife he wants, he'll take the wife he can get. I've stood all I'm going to of this."

"Then you're more to blame for coming back than for going," she sobbed desperately. "For you've made me I-like you again."

The troubled scalawag waddled up and thumped her rallyingly.

"Anty," he cooed. "Anty?"

"Say 'marma,'" wheedled Lynn.

"Anty!" shrieked the scalawag, stamping.

"He won't say it, Ianthy," mur-

mured Lynn, "so I reckon I'll have to stay a little longer yet."

"Oh, Tom, do you mean——" She rose weakly to her feet, her drenched eyes searching his rather inscrutable face. "Don't go! Don't!"

For he had moved away from her. But not farther than the kitchen cupboard. He lifted down the battered, lean gripsack and brought it to her, open.

"Dive into it, Ianthy," he requested.

She did so, and brought up a deed and a bank book.

"It's a deed of gift to 'my wife, Ianthy Lynn,' of the Miller farm, and a joint bank account of a thousand dollars," explained Lynn. "I didn't mention them before because they weren't any good till now. I saw the judge in town to-day, Ianthy, and had a little talk with him. I told him that by doing what I prayerfully took to be my duty, I had gotten into a damn' lot of trouble. And I told him that the coming of a little scalawag was apt to turn a big scalawag into a half-decent imitation of a man. And I promised—— Well, I had quite a little chat with the judge. And I reckon he'd set aside that decree—if you ask him, Ianthy."

Now, startlingly and plaintively near, the whippoorwills in the apple orchard began calling one another. Ianthy dropped the deed and the bank book to the floor as property less valuable to her than the coat sleeve of the man beside her. She timidly touched it, then clung there, with her head pressed against it.

He laid his big hand awkwardly, but very tenderly, upon her bright hair.



# No Frenchman for Nelly!

By Ralph Bergengren

Author of "Motherhood and Mr. Roe," "Mrs. Bright and the Big Four," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

What a "Tipperary Frenchman" did for Miss Harriet Barnes, author of "The Woman in Armor."

NELLY," said Miss Harriet Barnes, "did I see a *strange* man talking to you over the fence this morning, when you were hanging out the clothes?"

Except for a slight emphasis on the word "strange," which she really couldn't help, Miss Barnes spoke in an ordinary conversational tone, as if making some remark about the weather. In Pine Haven, for that matter, all men were strange, except Mr. Perkins the grocer, and Mr. Perkins was a business acquaintance of hardly two weeks' standing. Leave out Mr. Perkins, and any man talking to Nelly over the fence was a strange man, although honestly it was not at all strange that any man should wish to talk with Nelly if he got a chance.

"Sure," replied Nelly. "He's a Frinchman. He's a—what-d'ye-call it when it ain't a mountain?"

"Valet?" suggested Harriet.

"The same," said Nelly. "A valley he is to the fine old gent from N' York that lives down the road a bit. Him as y' wrote to about gettin' some fresh eggs."

"So!" said Miss Barnes. "Mr. Bowditch keeps a French valet, does he? If I'd known that sooner, I'd have hesitated to ask him if he sold eggs. But as he hasn't deigned to answer, I dare say it doesn't make any difference. If I were you," added Miss Barnes, with the false assumption that if she were

Nelly she would act like anybody else, "I wouldn't *encourage* any Frenchman."

"That's right," agreed Nelly. "'Yes-sir' and 'Nosir' was all he got out of me. Them Frinchmen has to be watched."

"I'm glad you know it, Nelly," said Miss Barnes. "In a country neighborhood like this, any attractive young woman must be especially careful not to make talk."

"I don't know anything that would peeve me more," said Nelly earnestly, "than to have this village talkin' about *me*. Him not havin' much English, and me havin' no Frinch, we ain't likely to waste much time in idle chatter. Not as I'd object to passin' the time o' day with anybody, male or female."

Miss Barnes had come to Pine Haven to write her first novel, bringing Nelly Corcoran with her for practical domestic purposes. She was a woman of independent nature and—which is also important—of independent income. Her picture appeared in the newspapers; sometimes in the literary department—for she was the author of the well-known books, "If the Men, Why Not the Women?" "1001 Reasons Why Women Should Vote," and "Pride and Pantaloons"—and sometimes in the news columns, for she delivered lectures and produced interesting copy when interviewed. Men paused in the serious perusal of their newspapers to





"Miss Barnes, I wouldn't be so sure m'self but that feller ain't a spy."

look at her portrait, which is just the kind of a portrait that editors most like to publish. From an editorial point of view, Harriet, although she did not suspect it, was almost as good as the press agent's pleasing sample member of a beauty chorus. She had, however,

more dignity and wore more clothing. If you had looked in "Who's Who," you would have found that she was—well, something over thirty-five.

At present, Miss Barnes was surfeited with human society. She desired to live without social engagements,

which are admittedly detrimental to the serious business of writing a novel; and this she knew would be impossible without cutting loose from the summer gayety of her beloved, but fashionable family. A real-estate agent in Lockport, not far from Pine Haven, had sent her a photograph of the cottage; and although he had never satisfactorily explained how he knew that she wanted one, the cottage had proved exactly the thing for her. It had seclusion and was not too far from the grocery. It had charm, being honestly colonial with a later porch and a still later bathroom. It was three miles from Pokowoket Beach and the Pokowoket summer colony. Its more immediate neighbors, barring the eccentric New Yorker who had a place down the road and lived there most of the year, were village folk unlikely to interfere with authorship. She had brought Nelly, who had been three years in the family, a typewriter, three ribbons, and six packages of paper, each containing five hundred large sheets. In these respects Miss Barnes was equipped, if nobody bothered her, to write a novel of about nine hundred thousand words.

So far she had typewritten the title: "The Woman in Armor, by Harriet Barnes." She had also typed a brief note to her neighbor:

MR. THOMAS BOWDITCH, *Pine Haven.*

DEAR SIR: May I ask if you ever sell eggs? I find it difficult to obtain eggs of a uniform freshness at the grocery. The sight of your many fine hens leads me to hope that I may purchase some of their eggs. Very truly yours,

H. BARNES.

It was Harriet's way to sign her name like that—H. Barnes—when she wrote a business letter.

She had neither seen nor heard from Mr. Bowditch. Nelly had seen him when they had first come, and habitually spoke of him as a fine old gentleman. It now appeared that she had seen and spoken, so far as their differ-

ent languages permitted, with his French valet! One could hardly expect a gentleman with a French valet to barter eggs by the dozen; but he might at least have answered her letter.

The next afternoon Harriet had a closer view of the Frenchman. Coming home from her afternoon walk, she stopped in at the grocery to buy a ten-cent package of chocolate peppermints. One may be earnestly engaged in leading a sex out of bondage and yet have a sweet tooth. Men nowadays eat candy—yes, and chew gum, some of them—and are not ashamed to be seen doing it. Mr. Perkins was waiting on the Frenchman, and Miss Barnes had a good look at him.

He was a medium-sized, rather sturdy man, with a carefully waxed and pointed red mustache and a small red imperial, or—as it used to be called—"goatee;" and something in the way he leaned his elbows on the cigar case helped her to recognize him instantly as the man she had seen leaning over the fence. It was rather a shock to her to see that he was red-headed; but, on second thought, why shouldn't he be? For all she knew, Harriet told herself, there might be red-headed Chinese and Japanese, as well as Frenchmen. His manner and taste in personal adornment, the waxed ends of his mustache, the shrug of his shoulders when he caught her looking at him, something impertinent and flirtatious in his blue eye, the rakish angle of his soft black hat, and the frisky flutter of the gay butterfly bow in which he tied his cravat—all these items expressed the irresponsible gayety of his vivacious nation. Harriet had never been in Paris, but this man was just the kind of person she would have expected to see there.

"*Tobac, seal vous play, mon sewer,*" he said politely.

Mr. Perkins, who seemed to know just what his customer wanted, pro-

duced a ten-cent tin of the famous Pipe Dream Mixture—"All the bliss and none of the bite," as it says in the advertisement—out of which the Frenchman filled and lighted a short and well-blackened clay pipe of the kind sometimes called a T. D. The well-known and delicious aroma of the Pipe Dream lingered after the smoker had vanished.

Mr. Perkins rubbed his double chin thoughtfully, a habit that made Harriet glad that commercial enterprise had led confectioners to put up chocolate peppermints untouchably in neat paper boxes.

"That's Lewey Blank," he said sociably. "He works fer Bowditch—brushes his clothes and blacks his boots and makes him wash behind his ears. Kind of a mother to him."

Mr. Perkins spoke between contempt and amusement. His tone suggested that he was a man who had seen much, but never before had he seen anything like *that*.

"I judge," said Harriet, "that he hasn't been in this country long enough to learn English."

"Him?" said Mr. Perkins. He rested his double chin on the spot where a dressier man would have worn a necktie, and looked mysteriously at his customer. "He knows more English some days than he does others," he continued significantly, and lowered his voice. "If there was anything to spy on in Pine Haven, Miss Barnes, I wouldn't be so sure m'self but that feller ain't a spy. And when ye come to that, I s'pose mebbe it's wuth while for them foreign governments to have a finger on the pulse of public opinion even down here in Pine Haven. We're what ye might call a small sample of the national mind, as I've said to my wife. Now, you take me. I dessay, day in, day out, I git as good a notion of what people are thinkin' as any man in the country. You can't help it, if you keep a grocery. And when I see that Frenchman loafin'

round and takin' in what the boys are sayin' when they git together, I can't help thinkin' he understands a lot more than he seems to."

This casual interview gave Harriet something to digest with her chocolates, the more so as it harmonized with a magazine article she had lately been reading. You could never tell, said the magazine article, when you were being spied upon. The maid who brushed your hair, or the man who brushed your clothes, or the boy who brushed your boots, might equally be in the pay of a European power intent upon keeping in touch with affairs in America. So extended and subtly organized was this Continental secret service that its agents swarmed like microbes in every American community. The story had been told of an American lady who had once employed a Japanese dining-room boy; and some years later, traveling in Japan, she had been introduced to Lieutenant Count Okasaki-Karumako. The count had smiled in his suave Oriental way and had said:

"Madame, do you still use butter on your oatmeal?"

Miss Barnes had not taken this article very seriously, and it now occurred to her that Mr. Perkins might also have read it. Such articles, however, *do* make an impression, and although Harriet had nothing to conceal from the French government, she found herself distinctly prejudiced against Louis Blanc. She had already decided that he looked unscrupulous, and she knew now that he had a better command of English than he had admitted to Nelly—if she could believe Nelly.

It was three days after this episode, one of those warm days in May when one can sit outdoors in anticipation of summer; and Miss Barnes, having spent the morning really getting to work on "The Woman in Armor," was sitting outdoors. From her porch



Somewhat to her astonishment, the car turned in at her own driveway.

hammock she could see the State highway, and on this highway a large motor car containing a man and a dog. Somewhat to her astonishment, the car turned in at her own driveway, with the collie sitting erect beside the driver, probably a lost motorist coming to ask the way to Lockport. He could hardly be a caller, for he was quite unfamiliar to her. But he had undoubtedly what Nelly would call "class;" and as for the collie, he looked like a pup who had owned motor cars all

his life. She watched them idly out of sight behind the porch shrubbery.

The car stopped beside the barn. The driver and the dog got out. The motorist, a broad man in the rear view, stopped to drag a small wicker basket out after him. Basket in hand, he turned toward the porch and saw Harriet rising from her hammock. He lifted his cap with the startled rapidity of a gentleman who had not expected to see a lady. It struck Harriet that he was far from being as old as his

thick white hair and rather military gray mustache suggested.

"Mr. Barnes about?" he asked briskly.

"Mr. Barnes!" echoed Harriet.

"Feller I got a note from about two weeks ago," explained the visitor. "H. Barnes. I'm Bowditch. I've been away. Haven't had a chance to answer that note. Thought the eggs would do just as well. Don't sell 'em. Ain't in the egg business. But Lord Harry, I've got more eggs this minute than I know what to do with! Hens embarrass me, layin' all the time. I picked up a dozen or so this mornin' and dropped 'em into a basket and said to myself, 'I'll just take these over to that man Barnes——'"

"There—there isn't any man Barnes," said Harriet. "I'm sorry—that is, I'm sorry to have caused a misunderstanding. I always write my business letters on the typewriter, and the 'H' stands for 'Harriet.'" I hoped one could buy eggs——"

Mr. Bowditch interrupted, standing with his cap in one hand and his basket in the other.

"Nobody can buy eggs of me," he replied firmly. "I don't know that it makes any difference who eats 'em—man or woman. You leave the basket out there by the barn, where I can see it from the road, and I'll pick it up the next time I come by." And he handed up the basket in such a matter-of-course way that instinctively Harriet took hold of the other side of the handle.

Then she wished she hadn't, for Mr. Bowditch promptly let go, and if she did the same, the eggs would fall between them. It is one thing to refuse a gift and another to hurl it at the feet of the giver. Nor would a basket of broken eggs look at all well dropped on a lady's front lawn.

"I—I can't take these eggs," expostulated Harriet.

"Give 'em to somebody else, then," said Mr. Bowditch. "I don't care what becomes of 'em."

He turned and made for his car; and he had so much the look of a man running away that, in spite of herself, Harriet laughed.

"I'll keep them—and thank you very much," she said; and then, thinking of something else, she added quickly: "Oh, Mr. Bowditch, you have a French valet?"

Bowditch stopped his flight and turned.

"French errand boy," he corrected in his abrupt fashion. "When I can't find anything else for him to do, he brushes my clothes."

"I wish you'd keep him busier," said Harriet. "He seems to spend a great deal of his time going by this house."

Mr. Bowditch came back to the porch.

"If Louis is annoying you——" he began gravely.

"No-o-o," interrupted Harriet. "It wouldn't be fair to say that. But he has been worrying me a little. You see, I am alone here with my maid, and I feel rather responsible for her. She's young, pretty, and probably flighty—at least thoughtless. I've never seen her in her own social sphere, but she is, I suspect, susceptible. Your valet is not unprepossessing to the eye—and you know the *French!*" Miss Barnes put a subtle emphasis on the last word, as if she were calling a spade a spade.

"I know Louis," said Mr. Bowditch, "and as far as I know him, he's always behaved himself. Gets into a fight now and then, but that isn't flirtatious. And he's married already."

"O-h-h-h!" said Miss Barnes.

"Got a wife somewhere," continued the employer of Frenchmen. "I know it because I got it out of him once when he was hinting I ought to have a woman about the house. I told him, when I got married myself, I'd be fool



enough to consider it. I've tried married couples before. One of 'em is always no good, and if you fire one, off goes the other."

"I have a feeling," said Miss Barnes, "that he is attracted by Nelly. A man with a family!"

"I don't know how much of a family he's got," said Mr. Bowditch thoughtfully. "Anyway, he's got a pretty good job, and I guess I can persuade him not to risk it by coming too often in this direction."

He whistled to his dog, who had discovered and treed the cat, again raised his tweed cap, and turned to the motor. This time Miss Barnes did not stop him. Instead, she took the basket of eggs into the house.

No lady with any reasonable amount of pride can accept a basket of eggs from a gentleman she has never before seen without some return. To count these eggs, estimate their value at the market price, and leave the exact change in the basket, seemed, on consideration, rather a mean and ungracious denial of Mr. Bowditch's own statement that he did not sell eggs. Miss Barnes knew that Mr. Bowditch knew that she would do nothing like that. Harriet liked to cook. She used some of Mr. Bowditch's eggs to make a cake; and, as the window where she worked each morning at "The Woman in Armor" commanded a long stretch of highway, she was able to slip the cake into the basket just before the owner returned for it.

A few days later, Mr. Bowditch came back with more eggs and stopped for a cup of tea. It turned out that they had friends in common, that Mr. Bowditch had taken up this abandoned farm in Pine Haven as a place to which he might occasionally "run" from the city, and had got into the habit of using it as a place from which he might occasionally "run" to the city. Harriet guessed, although Mr. Bowditch natu-

rally did not mention his finances, that he had an independent income and had never had to work for a living. It came out also that Mr. Bowditch was a gastronome; in other words, he had a high idea of food and took pleasure in cooking as well as eating it. They discussed cookery.

"We hear a lot about the French appreciation of salads," said Mr. Bowditch, "but you take my man, Louis. My pig has a better understanding and taste for salads than that Frenchman. I've never been in France myself, but I've fed a Frenchman this past year, and all he wants to eat is beef and potatoes, and lots of 'em. I had a word with him about not taking his exercise so much in this direction."

"There's another one now," said Miss Barnes with a sigh. "I suppose it can't be helped, and anyway this one isn't *French*. I heard voices in the kitchen two nights ago, and as Nelly had left the door open, they were quite audible. One was a man's, and he was singing 'The Wearing of the Green.' I asked Nelly about it next morning, and she was quite frank. It seems there is a young man in the neighborhood who comes from her own part of Ireland. I can do nothing, of course, except suggest that she always leave the kitchen door open, but I do wish she preferred feminine associates."

"Nelly looks to me," said Mr. Bowditch impersonally, "singularly able to take care of herself."

"She has hinted as much," admitted Harriet. "I have often found people ungrateful when one tried to protect them."

It was a question with Harriet whether to confide Mr. Perkins' suspicions to Mr. Bowditch, but she decided that they would keep. Despite the magazine article, Harriet could not quite persuade herself that the French government was vitally interested in the current gossip of Mr. Perkins' gro-

cery store. She was quite certain that there was some mystery, something ominously false and deceptive, about Louis Blanc, but unless she could show some tangible reason for this belief, it had better be kept to herself. Mr. Bowditch, in fact, might also fail in gratitude toward a well-meant effort to protect him.

By the end of a month, Harriet felt that she had no occasion whatever to worry about Louis Blanc; she almost forgot his existence. Far from coming into the neighborhood of her cottage, the Frenchman, when she saw him distantly about the village, evidently tried to avoid her. Coming upon him again in Mr. Perkins' grocery, she was rather amused to see that he instantly turned his back on her. Apparently what Mr. Bowditch had said to him rankled in that Gallic bosom. He showed his feeling toward her by a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders, rather spoiled in effect, Harriet thought, because immediately afterward he struck a match on his trousers to light his pipe. She felt that somehow she would have had more admiration for the French if he had struck his match somewhere else.

Meantime, "The Woman in Armor" progressed steadily, chapter after chapter; and the sturdy Irish neighbor came regularly evening after evening. He had developed into a steady company. Miss Barnes met him and decided that she could take no reasonable exception to his visits. He was an honest-seeming fellow, smooth shaven and near-sighted, for he wore spectacles, and there was to Harriet something pathetic in the careful way he parted his red hair on the left side, and plastered it smoothly into two bucolic bangs. What made it pathetic was her realization that Mr. Donovan considered this arrangement of his hair beautiful. His clothes were such as Harriet had noticed on sale in the back part of Mr. Perkins' emporium; but they quite

failed to make Mr. Donovan look like the dashing young man in the poster with which Mr. Perkins called attention to them. Mr. Donovan was easily embarrassed, and when introduced to Nelly's mistress, had grabbed his stiff derby hat and put it on his head, in order that he might politely take it off again. He was so harmless that Miss Barnes, after several evenings of Hibernian melody in the kitchen, had told Nelly that she might close the door.

Mr. Bowditch, who had fallen into a way of coming around with his car and taking Harriet out in the afternoon, said that Terence Donovan was probably a recent arrival in the neighborhood.

The theater has a convenient way of stating on the program that any desired number of years have elapsed since the preceding act. Imitating this useful custom, about three months have elapsed since the last paragraph. Miss Barnes had nearly completed "The Woman in Armor." The summer colony at Pokowoket Beach had gathered and dispersed again. Autumn was in the air, and Terence and Nelly still sang Hibernian ditties in the kitchen. War had broken out in Europe and was the chief topic of conversation in Mr. Perkins' grocery. But the French government, if the honest grocer's dark suspicions were correct, had not seen fit to recall Louis Blanc. He revealed, thought Harriet, a mean disposition, for he still turned his back on her whenever they happened to meet.

There was one road over which Mr. Bowditch had not driven Miss Barnes in his car, a short cut through the woods from Pine Haven to Lockport.

"You'll get well shaken up," said he, "but it's a pretty bit of woods, especially at this season. I've been saving it up. It'll be prettier later, when the leaves fall. There's a grove of white birch I'm going to show you, but you ought to see it in winter. The sun goes

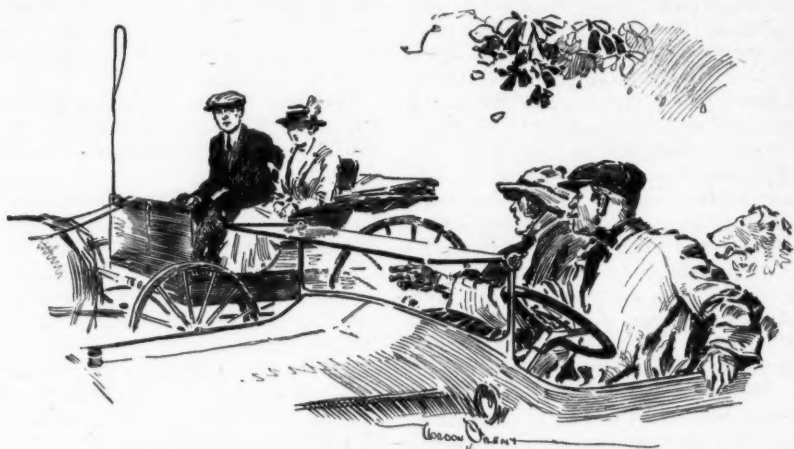
down back of it, and the light coming through the bare branches is something to remember."

"I've never been in the country in winter," admitted Harriet.

"I didn't expect to be when I came here," said Bowditch reminiscently. "But it kind of got me. I'm lazy and selfish—that's the trouble with me. It isn't the best thing for a man not to have to *work*. Some men go to the devil and others just potter about. I'm one of the potterers. And then, when

the only vehicle in sight was a decrepit buggy some distance in advance of them.

"What beats me," continued Mr. Bowditch, "is I never guessed a man could miss anything so much. Never *disliked* women—but when it came to livin' with one of 'em all the time, I couldn't see anything in it. Never seemed to me a man looked like a man when he was makin' love." Mr. Bowditch's mind, which seemed somehow to be suffering, went off at a tangent.



"And what are you doing with that *man*?" demanded Miss Barnes.

something happens and you want to change—to make yourself over—Lord Harry, you haven't got it in you! No gumption."

The car was approaching a bend in the road and demanded Mr. Bowditch's attention. He pumped the horn savagely, as if to relieve his feelings.

"I'm goin' to miss this sort of thing like the dickens—and that's a fact," continued Mr. Bowditch, again pumping the horn as the car turned the corner.

The road ran before them like a straight tunnel through the woods and

"I thought I knew that buggy!" he exclaimed briskly, and increased the speed of his car so suddenly that he almost upset the lady beside him and the collic on the back seat.

It would have been evident to a less perspicacious woman than Harriet that Mr. Bowditch was trying, as the saying is, to "declare himself;" that he found it difficult; and that this intention had become suddenly mingled with something else that was altogether incomprehensible. Her companion was apparently chasing happiness and the buggy at the same time; and, however

doubtful he might feel about overtaking happiness, there was no doubt whatever that he meant to come up with the buggy. The wind blew Harriet's veil in a horizontal flutter; the collie barked with nervous excitement; the horn tooted; and the pursued vehicle, oblivious of the kind of interest it had excited, drew aside in a clumsy way to let the car pass. Bowditch put on his brake, and the car slowed down beside the buggy.

In that antediluvian vehicle, which for obvious reasons was being driven with one hand, sat Nelly and a man. And this man, although it was a long time since she had seen him face to face, Miss Barnes recognized as Louis Blanc without his waxed mustache and imperial.

"What are you doing with that horse?" demanded Mr. Bowditch, addressing himself indignantly to Louis Blanc.

"What are you doing with that man?" demanded Miss Barnes, addressing herself reproachfully to Nelly Corcoran.

Both vehicles had stopped. The horse, a fat and aged quadruped, seized the opportunity to gather a quick lunch from the tall grass by the wayside. The maid, wide-eyed with surprise for an instant, relapsed into unseemly giggles. Louis did not remove his arm from its incriminating position. He couldn't.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he exclaimed. "*Cet* horse, he demands the exercise——"

"I told you I knew that buggy," said Mr. Bowditch to Harriet. "I know my own things as far as I can see 'em. Demands exercise, does he?" continued Mr. Bowditch to Louis. "Well, I demand explanation. What do you mean *working* a horse I've pensioned in his old age?"

"I don't believe he's been driven very hard," said Harriet, in spite of herself. "That man is *married*," she added and looked to see Nelly exhibit horror.

Nelly failed to exhibit. She giggled again.

"So he is," she admitted.

"And you knew it!" exclaimed Miss Barnes.

"Sure and I ought to," explained Nelly. "He's married to me."

"Ha!" exploded Mr. Bowditch. "So that's what you've been up to, is it? Bigamy, eh?"

"Not so bad as that, sir," replied Louis, in reasonably good English. "She's the one I spoke to you about, sir."

"And so *this*," said Harriet, who had been mentally removing Louis' butterfly bow and substituting a derby for his rakish soft hat, "*this* is Mr. Donovan!"

"The same," said Nelly, "though his true name is Corcoran. That's how I got mine."

"We're from the same county," exclaimed Terence, formerly Louis. "Whoooooa!" He had tried to touch his hat with the hand holding the reins, and the aged nag had started with astonishing promptness, as if to prove that he was not so old as he looked. "Married we were before we came over, but we couldn't make a go of it together, so we had to run single. I'd picked up a little French working in a restaurant in N' York, and Louis seemed to find it easier getting a job than Terence, sir. Nelly—that's Mrs. Corcoran—wrote me her lady wanted a nice, quiet place for the summer, and so I tipped off the real-estate man in Lockport. A man and his wife like to see each other once in a while, sir. We haven't hurt the horse, but I guess the game is up, sir——"

"Drive him back easy," said Mr. Bowditch, "and I'll talk to you later."

He started the car, and Harriet, looking back over her shoulder, saw Mr. and Mrs. Terence Corcoran soberly following.

There was so much to think about

that for some minutes they rode in silence. Then Mr. Bowditch found his voice.

"If it hadn't been for that Tipperary Frenchman," said he in a surprised tone, as if it had just occurred to him, "I'd never have met you at all."

"I'm afraid you wouldn't," admitted Harriet. "I never could understand how that man in Lockport knew I wanted a cottage."

"Here I am," said Mr. Bowditch, with deep feeling. "I'm forty-three years old. I began lookin' like Methuselah when I was thirty. Been a freak ever since I was in college. Never had to work. Never did anything worth while except raise a few prize vegetables. Know how to cook, sail a boat, and run a car. Appreciate activity in

other folks and wouldn't interfere with it. Never wanted to marry anybody till the last month—and now if I can't marry *you*, life is goin' to be so empty that, Lord Harry, I don't know what I'm goin' to do with it! I can't say," added Mr. Bowditch, with a grim kind of self-criticism, "that I cut much ice as Romeo, but I'm awfully in earnest."

"I don't care much for heroics myself," said Harriet. "That's the weak part of 'The Woman in Armor'—the love speeches are just silly. I like being awfully in earnest much better. And then, too, there's a practical side to it." Miss Barnes reached back over the seat and patted the collie's head. "There's Nelly and Terence. After their happy summer in my kitchen, it would really be too cruel to separate them."



### A SUMMER SUNDAY

THE summer Sunday glows with heat,  
But leaves hang thick and green  
As once they roofed a little church.  
(Oh, long, sad years between!)  
And as I dream, the door's ajar  
To greet its flock that comes from far.

Once more I see the ruddy boys,  
The mother's little maid  
Prim in her Sunday best—its joys  
A trifle checked and stayed  
By its taut newness, and the thin,  
But throttling, band beneath her chin.

The good man's voice gives out the hymn;  
The plaintive notes ring high;  
The lads thump in; and up the aisle,  
Half bantering, half shy,  
The eyes of maidenhood droop sweet  
As favored footsteps pass each seat.

And as he speaks the grand old words,  
"Faith, Hope—but Love is all!"  
How conscious sit the stalwart ranks,  
How low the lashes fall!  
God love—man love—so like that then,  
As with one breath, we sigh: "Amen!"

RHEEM DOUGLAS.



# Getting Engaged

By Lee Foster Hartman

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

Some are born engaged, some achieve engagements, and some have engagements thrust upon them. This young man belonged to class two, and had a terrifically hard time achieving his. It is not a sad story.

FOR the seventh time in a fortnight of flawless June evenings, Keith Loring tore over the three miles of perfect macadam that separated the Glendale Country Club, where he was temporarily residing, from the big house where Marjorie Blake permanently dwelt. The wheels of the long, low-bodied gray car, after purring softly over the three miles of smooth country road, shifted to an eager fretting of sharp gravel as Loring swung into the driveway and the big acetylenes flared across flower beds, trim lawns, and deep, shadowy hedges. Ahead loomed the dark granite pile of the house, curtained windows here and there blocking out tall oblongs of subdued light, while upon the porch a flood of radiance streamed from the open doorway. A girl's figure was outlined against it.

Loring brought the car to a halt and sprang up the stone steps, snatching off his cap and beaming at the slender, blue-clad figure within the screened doorway.

"Bully evening, isn't it? All well, and at home, I hope." He was blithely, indifferently commonplace.

"No, we're not," came the crisp retort.

The young man paused, with a little wondering lift of his head.

The slender figure in blue, from the other side of the screen door, began to recapitulate:

"Father's holding a meeting of the Glendale County Geological Club in the

library; mother has gone to visit Aunt Emily, who's ill; Mildred is upstairs with a sick headache; and the butler has sprained his ankle."

"Oh, then, that's fine!" exclaimed Loring.

"What?"

"I mean, I'm awfully sorry——"

"You needn't be. Father's having the time of his life with those old fossils—both human *and* mineral; Aunt Emily's never really ill, but only thinks she is; Mildred's headache is nothing but an excuse to shut herself up in her room and write pages and pages to Herbert Duckworth——"

"Lucky dog!" interjected Loring.

"And I suspect the butler merely wanted the day off."

"But that's not why you're here tending the door. Weren't you really watching for me?"

"You?" There was a note of challenge in the voice.

"You knew I wouldn't fail to come."

"Come for what, Mr. Loring?"

"As if that needed an answer!"

The young man, approaching the screen, bent forward until his face pressed against the wire netting, where—until that instant—the girl's had been.

"Will you accept an invitation to come out on the porch, or will you tender me one to come in?" he cheerfully demanded.

"You can't come in. You always make such a racket," said Marjorie re-

provingly. "You'd disturb the proceedings of the Glendale County Geological Club."

"I don't want to come in, if you're coming out. Do come out. We'll go for a spin in the car."

"I won't go for a spin. I've been counting up a little this afternoon, Mr. Loring. I've known you less than two weeks, and I've motored—oh, I know it must be hundreds of miles—in that car."

"But you've no idea yet what that car is really capable of—" began the youth enthusiastically.

"I know what *I'm* capable of."

"You're capable of making me propose to you five times—and the sixth will be through a screen door—"

"Now don't be silly again!"

"Through a screen door," reiterated the young man threateningly, "unless you consent to come out on the porch like a reasonable human being and treat me like one."

The screen door swung open—a concession on Marjorie's part, qualified, however, by the emphatic declaration:

"I shan't go anywhere in that car to-night."

"Then we'll compromise on the couch hammock," agreed Loring readily. "It's more comfortable than the car, anyway."

"And you'll find that wicker chair still more comfortable." A slender forefinger remorselessly pointed to where he should sit.

"I hate armchairs," he protested. "They give me the fidgets."

The finger still pointed.

He sat.

Marjorie appropriated the couch hammock, nimbly drawing one slippered foot up under her and yielding an elbow to the comfortable depths of the cushions heaped at one end. The other slippered foot, grazing the porch floor, propelled the hammock gently back and forth.

Loring, hunched forward precariously on the edge of the chair, gazed with the devouring eyes of twenty-two upon the tantalizing vision in pale blue swaying before him.

"About marrying me, now—"

"Don't be a pest, Mr. Loring."

"But mayn't I have an answer?"

"You've had five answers already. You're a nice boy—at times. But it's quite hopeless. Even if I did love you—which I don't—there's father—"

"I could manage him easily."

"No, you couldn't. Just look at poor Mildred and Bert Duckworth. Father's more dead set than ever against their marrying—"

"Oh, he'll cave in," declared Loring optimistically. "You know I'm to be Bert's best man. We fixed that up ages ago—long before I knew that Mildred had a sister. Confound Duckworth!" he went on reminiscently. "To think that I had to endure months of his talk about her, and never once so much as a hint that *you* existed! I would have been in blind ignorance to this hour if I hadn't stumbled upon that photograph of you—"

"Which you were base enough to steal."

"He didn't deserve to have it. He had chucked it away in a drawer. And he had about seventeen of Mildred stuck up all round his room. Made the place look like a photographer's shop. However"—his frank, boyish smile broke forth again—"I've been trying to make up for lost time."

"And it's quite useless, you see." She shook her head archly at him and started the couch hammock again into motion.

To Keith Loring, in love for the first time in his life, it was exasperating to find himself floundering deeper every day in the meshes of this net, and to find her unyieldingly adamant beneath the surface of friendly familiarity which she accorded him. He had done



Loring gazed with devouring eyes upon the tantalizing vision in pale blue swaying before him. "About marrying me, now——"

all that youth could do in the two weeks since he had discovered that there was a Marjorie Blake and had made Duck-

worth take him out to Glendale and introduce him. She had certainly bent to the blast of his whirlwind pursuit of

"Don't be a pest,  
Mr. Loring."



her, but it was only the yielding of the slender sapling to the gale. That was what made it so exasperating—she bent just so far, and not an inch farther. To any one but Keith Loring, it would have been discouraging indeed, with the further obstacle of her father—a formidable proposition, when one considered how unrelentingly he had held on to Mildred in spite of the fact that Bert Duckworth, as a son-in-law, would be one in a million. Moreover, Marjorie was the younger daughter, and, by all tradition, the apple of his eye.

"Dynamite or something will fetch him," Loring had grimly reflected. But, in the meantime, he was confronted by the recalcitrant Marjorie herself.

"You're a nice boy," was her soothing and oft-repeated formula, which made him rear like a horse to the lash.

"I'm not! I'm a man—male citizen, voter, income-tax payer. What more can you ask?" he demanded, in stout defense of his age.

"A man who does things." She regarded him aslant from the hammock cushions. "I don't mean silly things like jumping over hurdles or running two hundred and twenty yards."

"I'd go through fire and——"

"One doesn't, in these days," she crisply checked him.

"That's the trouble," he gloomed. "I'd show you quick enough what I'm made of if only I had some kind of chance."

"Poor hero wants opportunity." She laughed at his downcast expression. "And yet you are a nice boy."

He jumped up impatiently from his chair and strode to the far end of the porch, where he stood for some moments looking darkly out upon the soft June night. Then his moody glance wandered toward the side of the house and the grounds in the rear, shrouded in shadow.

Marjorie, in the hammock, lifted her head to see what had become of him.

Standing in the shadow of the big stone pillar, she saw him suddenly start. He peered intently, and then turned and motioned to her. The wary, cautioning gesture drew her instantly across the porch with fleet, breathless steps. Gaining his side, she looked in the direction he pointed. A ladder, dimly outlined in the darkness, rested against an open window of the upper floor. She was just in time to see the slouching figure of a man, laden with some burden, leap from the lower rungs and, skulking along in the shadows, disappear in the bushes.

"A burglar!" she exclaimed in a tense whisper, clutching Loring's arm. "And that's the window of my room!"

"I'm going after him," declared Loring, springing to the porch rail.

Marjorie abruptly, but forcibly stayed him.

"You mustn't!"

"What? Let him get away like that? He had a suit case full of stuff!"

"Oh, dear! And I left the pearl necklace Aunt Emily gave me lying on the dresser! But you mustn't! You might get killed!"

He gave her a withering smile.

"Poor hero wants opportunity," he flung back at her. "Well, here's one, such as it is." Shaking off her grasp, he cleared the rail, about to drop to the lawn.

"Keith!"

It was the first time she had called him by that name. It stayed him for an instant.

"You mustn't go a step—if you love me——"

"Precisely why I'm going."

A sharp "chug-chug" arose from somewhere beyond the hedge in the rear, and then the soft whir of a starting car. Loring could dimly make out a machine with two occupants traversing the lane that led circuitously to the highroad.

"There're two of them, and they've



got a machine." He sprang back across the rail, his decision instantly altered. "I'll chase them in the car!"

Snatching up his cap, he dashed across the porch, ran down the steps, and with one mighty wrench set the engine of his car throbbing. Marjorie pursued him, pleading and protesting.

"Do you think I'm going to let those scamps make a clean get-away?" he demanded, deaf to her entreaties. "Not on your life!" He leaped into the car.

Marjorie sprang in beside him.

"Here, this won't do!"

"I won't budge!" she declared flatly.

"But, Miss Blake, there's no time to stop and argue. Come—please, now!"

"If you're determined to pursue those dreadful men, I'm going, too."

He confronted her debatingly as she sat beside him with folded hands while the engine whirled impatiently. Argument was clearly useless, and the seconds fleeting fast.

"All right, then," he announced grimly. "Hold tight. This is going to be some ride!"

The machine leaped forward, with a crisp rustle through the gravel. The acetylene lamps flashed out along the driveway, and with a wide sweep the car gained headway and swung out upon the smooth macadam of the road. Loring threw the throttle to the last notch.

Marjorie gave a little gasp and clutched at the sides of the seat. Trees, hedges, fences, began to dart past—a panic of shadowy, ghostlike forms, while the acetylenes bored long, sharp cones of light into the darkness, and the road slipped like a bright ribbon under the fast-moving machine.

"You shouldn't have come," said Loring soberly, hunched over the steering wheel, and now seriously intent on crowding the car to its utmost.

"I wouldn't have—missed it for—the world!" exclaimed Marjorie between lurches.

This wild dash through the June

night had awakened a thrill of adventure in her. For the moment the more serious aspects of the affair were lost in the sheer excitement of the chase.

She was a picture, had he had eyes for anything but the bright strip of macadam slipping fleetly under the wheels. The quick rush of air had set her cheeks aglow and snatched at truant curls of her hair, only to fling them back upon the golden head. The shimmering pale-blue stuff of her gown fluttered and clung close about her in the blast.

"Will we catch them?" she asked eagerly.

"If anything on four wheels can beat this pace——" He shrugged his shoulders significantly. "Just look at that speedometer."

Marjorie's eyes for a moment watched in fascination the little dial and the needle trembling upon it.

"They're doing some traveling themselves," muttered Loring, striving to peer into the distance, where as yet he could not discern the car ahead. Only countless motes of dust flashing and glinting in the glare of the headlights evidenced the recent passage of the fugitives. "Didn't I hear that the Tillburys were robbed the other night? Very likely these same chaps did the job."

"If they've taken my pearls!" lamented Marjorie. "They got every blessed bit of jewelry Eleanor Tillbury possessed, poor thing!"

Loring suddenly started up with a cry of vexation. Unmistakable sounds from the hood told him that his engine was beginning to go bad.

"Damn!"

"Why, Mr. Loring!"

"Beg pardon. That was only a slip of the tongue for 'tut-tut.'" Loring mentally cursed the soul of diabolical perversity that at times enters into mechanical devices. The speed of the car had perceptibly slackened.

"Is something wrong?"

"It's that forward cylinder on the right-hand side. It cuts up capers like this sometimes." Loring was doing some fast and hard thinking. "By Jove, I have it! We can stop at that road house we're coming to, and telephone the police station at Plympton to stop them. You see they can't turn off till they get to Haswell's Forks, and if they keep on to the right, as they're sure to do, they've got to pass through Plympton, and the police can hold them up."

"But they may not take the Plympton road," said Marjorie.

"Then they've got to negotiate that river road that comes out at Glendale Mills. It's an awfully roundabout way and a bad stretch of traveling. They surely won't try it; but if they should, we can reach Glendale Mills first by taking the turnpike just this side of the road house, and head them off ourselves. We get them either way."

"But the turnpike is closed. It's been under repair for weeks."

"But they've opened it to-day. I came along it this afternoon."

The lighted windows of the road house were already in view, and a minute later Loring drew up before it. He dashed inside, almost upsetting the landlord, who came out to meet him, in his frantic haste to get the Plympton police station on the wire. In less than two minutes he was back in the car, swinging it round to retrace the brief stretch of road to where the turnpike, crossing at right angles, led toward Glendale Mills.

"It's all right," he announced to Marjorie. "The police will watch for them at Plympton. All we've got to do now is to streak it to Glendale Mills on the chance that they might take the river road after all. They probably don't know that the turnpike is open again." Loring opened up the throttle, and the car, seemingly content to do better, raced forward again.

"Will they really stop them in Plympton?"

"Trust them for that," replied Loring confidently. "They're only too eager in that village to hold up motor cars on any pretext. I put the case to them pretty strong; said those chaps had probably made a big haul. At least one suit case of stuff stolen from your house—and jewelry in it very likely. I told them we'd be along and identify the loot—"

"But we can't, if we're going to Glendale Mills," interposed Marjorie.

"We can telephone over to Plympton. If they haven't turned up, we'll know they've taken the river road, and can get ready to stop them ourselves. If the Plympton police have landed them, we'll motor over at once. You can identify the things they've swiped; they'll be clapped into jail; and you and I will have put over a good night's work. Something to startle and impress your father with when that meeting of the Geological Club breaks up." Loring turned hopefully to her. "Maybe he'll begin to distinguish me from the furniture."

"I do hope they don't take the river road," said Marjorie, reflecting that the business of apprehending the fleeing bandits was a task for the Plympton officers of the law rather than for the reckless young enthusiast at her side.

"I only hope they do," declared Loring grimly. "If my engine had been working decently, the Plympton police would never have had a look-in."

"You against two men—and very likely armed," Marjorie skeptically pointed out.

"Oh, I could flash a pocket wrench in the dark if necessary."

"A poor substitute matched against the real thing," commented Marjorie dryly.

"Well, you needn't worry. As it happens, my dear child, this affair has already become a battle of brains—"

"A poor substitute matched against the real thing," the girl maliciously repeated.

"Brilliant!" retorted Loring. "Perhaps you'll tell me who's ahead in this game, so far. Either way, they run into a trap; who set it, I'd like to know? When I restore your Aunt Emily's pearls to your contrite neck——"

"Never!" declared Marjorie vehemently. "I'd rather never see them again."

"Fortunately, you are not managing this affair."

"Oh, but I shall manage it, if I like. If those men have really taken the river road, I'm not going to let you do anything risky or foolish, which you'd be sure to do. That's why I came along."

"Humph!" ejaculated Loring. "And half an hour ago you were sighing to see me in some real, big action."

"But not too big—for you, I mean." She was sweetly exasperating.

Loring glowered savagely at the road before him. They were fast approaching Glendale Mills, a scattered group of houses where the turnpike and the circuitous river road met.

The spire of a little church, gleaming faintly white in the darkness, came into view. Just beyond it stood the parsonage, of square and comfortable proportions, white and green like the church, surrounded by a neat lawn and trim hedge. The cheery glow of light from the windows prompted a thought to Loring.

"The preacher will have a telephone. We can call up Plympton from here."

He stopped the car before the parsonage and assisted Marjorie to alight. The sound of their approach and the halting of the motor had drawn some one to the door. As they hastened up the walk, the door opened, and the pleasant, wrinkled face of a middle-aged and aproned woman greeted them.

"Come right in," she said cordially. "The pastor is in his study."

"May I use your telephone?" asked Loring. "It's very urgent——"

"Yes, indeed," the woman beamed upon him. "And won't the young lady come with me while you're doing so?" She ingratiatingly slipped her arm within Marjorie's, who wonderingly found herself drawn toward a room off the hall. "You must be very tired from your ride. Can't I get you something?" The rope portières parted and fell behind the two women. Loring strode instantly to the telephone, which he observed farther down the wide hall running through the center of the house, flanked by the stairs leading to the rooms above.

"I'm Mrs. Marsh," the housekeeper explained to Marjorie. "I've been in Doctor McCosh's service for over twenty years, and it's many a happy bride I've welcomed into this house."

"Bride?" echoed Marjorie bewilderedly.

"And none more beautiful, my dear." Mrs. Marsh beamed beatifically upon the bewildered girl. "Don't you want to arrange your hair before the ceremony? It's a little disarranged from your ride—not that it isn't becoming even as it is. What a pity you lost your hat! But I know how it is with these runaway matches——"

"Runaway matches!" exclaimed Marjorie, turning aghast upon the maternal and doting Mrs. Marsh. At the same time she was vaguely conscious that Loring in the hall was hurling excited, detached phrases into the telephone.

"They're none the worse for being called that, my dear. And many a brave young girl like yourself has found her happiness just as you're doing——"

"But I'm not going to be married!" Marjorie managed to interpolate.

"Land sakes! Don't tell me you've quarreled with him already! And Doctor McCosh waiting to join you!"

Marjorie turned and fled precipi-

tately to the hall, just as Loring hung up the receiver.

"Hooray! The Plympton police have caught them!" he exclaimed excitedly. "And it's your stuff in the suit case all right; your initials were on the bag, and your monogram on some of the things proved it. The woman with the crook says——"

"The woman?"

"Yes, it wasn't two men after all. They say the woman has been raising an awful stew and declares the stuff belongs to her. Pretty nervy, eh? I said we'd motor right over and call that bluff!"

In his elation Loring caught hold of both of Marjorie's hands. A door on the right had meanwhile opened, and the grave, spectacled face of the Reverend Doctor Jedediah McCosh looked out upon the two young people. Loring, abruptly recalled to himself, let go of Marjorie's hands. The clergyman smiled understandingly.

"You are quite certain that you love this young lady?" he addressed Loring in a bland, unctuous voice.

Loring, startled by the frank question, veered uncertainly.

"Why, of course I love her," he stammered. "But how in the deuce did you know?"

"And you are firm in your resolve to wed her?"

Loring's eyebrows lifted.

"Well, rather! I say, are you a mind reader?"

"Oh, Keith, listen!" interrupted Marjorie. "There's some mistake."

"Mistake?" The Reverend Doctor McCosh caught up the word. "My dear child, if there is any doubt in your mind about your desire to give yourself to this young man——"

"Oh, she hasn't a ghost of a doubt," sang out Loring.

"Keith, don't be silly," began Marjorie earnestly.

"Quite right," approved the clergy-

man. "Those about to enter into the holy bonds of matrimony——"

"When—now?" demanded Loring.

"I am ready," agreed Doctor McCosh.

"Do stop this fooling!" Marjorie burst forth impatiently at Loring.

"The dear young thing is a bit flustered," crooned Mrs. Marsh, advancing to Marjorie's side.

"No, I'm not!" Marjorie veered away from the mothering arm. "We didn't come here to get married at all!"

"But since we're here, and the doctor has the time to spare, it would be a pity——"

"Mr. Loring!" Marjorie's blue eyes flashed ominously.

The Reverend Doctor Jedediah McCosh stared gravely at each of the young disputants in turn, crooking his head forward and cocking his eyes over the rims of his big horn-framed spectacles.

"My dear young friends, it is quite unseemly to make sport of so serious a matter."

"He's never serious," interjected Marjorie.

"I never was more in earnest in my life," avowed Loring. "I'll gladly let those burglars go to blazes——"

Marjorie abruptly ignored him by turning her back.

"We only came in to use your telephone," she explained to Doctor McCosh.

A shade of disappointment crossed the clergyman's face.

"Then you're not the couple that were to be married here to-night?"

"No, indeed!"

"We'll have to make it some other night, doctor," sighed Loring regretfully.

Doctor McCosh was racking his memory.

"The young gentleman—I forget his name—phoned me that it was most urgent, and he and his affianced, Miss



"Will we catch them?"  
she asked eagerly.

"—ah—Blake— Then you are not Miss Blake?"

"And a Mr. Duckworth?" suddenly demanded Loring.

"Yes, yes, Duckworth—that's the name!" exclaimed Doctor McCosh. "You are friends of theirs?"

"I should say we are! I'm slated to be Duckworth's best man."

"To be married here to-night!" gasped Marjorie. Then abruptly her eyes widened with horror upon Loring. "It must have been Mildred and Bert in that other car!"

"Ho-ly beeswax!" ejaculated Loring. He spun around on one foot and reached the telephone in three strides. "In the hands of the Plympton police!"

Marjorie precipitately followed him.

"Say, are you sure—" Loring turned, his hand lifted to the receiver.

"Didn't you say the girl said the things in the suit case were hers?" demanded Marjorie almost tearfully.

"But your initials—"

"They're Mildred's initials. Now just see what you've done!"

Loring had already snatched down the receiver. As he put it to his ear, his face fell.

"Oh, damn!" he exploded impatiently.

The word echoed strangely in the sanctimonious abode of the Reverend Doctor McCosh, who, with the house-keeper, was an astounded witness of this strange performance. Mrs. Marsh's hands flew up in shocked protest at the sacrilege.

"It's a party wire, and some one's on it." Loring jabbed the receiver back upon its hook.



"Oh, get them quick!" besought Marjorie.

"May I inquire the occasion of this somewhat extraordinary proceeding?" The Reverend Doctor Jedediah McCosh advanced with formal, disapproving steps.

Loring nervously snatched the receiver down again.

"You tell him," he said to Marjorie, "while I try to get this fellow off the line."

Marjorie, in an effort to explain everything at once, poured forth a voluble, but somewhat incoherent stream of words, her eyes darting repeatedly from the bewildered face of the clergyman back to Loring, who shifted impatiently from one foot to the other, the receiver glued to his ear. Presently his face darkened, and he bent to listen intently.

"Oh, aren't they done speaking yet?" Marjorie burst forth.

Loring raised a silencing finger. His face was grave, his brow in wrinkled lines, as he continued to listen. A moment later, he hung up the receiver and turned to ask:

"Who in the deuce is Mr. Sprowle?"

"Oh, that dreadful, horrid man——" began Marjorie.

"My dear young lady!" protested Doctor McCosh. "We should not speak so of any fellow creature, however ungodly he may be. Mr. Sprowle is—ahem—not one of my parishioners—although he lives just below me on this road——"

"He's got a car?" demanded Loring.

"A very fast one, which, I regret to say, he uses chiefly on the Sabbath."

"He used to be papa's superintendent at our place," said Marjorie.

"We've got to clear out of here at once!" declared Loring.

"But aren't you going to telephone to Plympton——"

"Telephone! There's no time to tele-

phone. This fellow Sprowle will be here in two minutes. Your father has got wind of this affair already, and it was he just now telephoning Sprowle to head off Bert and Mildred here. It appears that you have quite a reputation for helping out runaway couples."

Loring grinned at the clergyman, who made a shocked gesture of protest. "Oh, that's all right," went on Loring rapidly. "I'm glad to know it. Now listen sharp. Every moment counts, and you've got an important part to play in this affair before the night's over. You understand—don't you?—the two people you are to marry are—well—stranded, over in Plympton. We're going after them—going to bring 'em back here, see? You sit tight when this man Sprowle comes along. Tell him you don't know a thing——"

"But my dear young man——" protested the Reverend Doctor McCosh at this enormity.

"Oh, hang it! I mean—well, you've simply got to bluff him some way. I can't stop to think how. It's a matter of life and death to these people over in Plympton. You've got to marry them to-night. It's your plain duty, and remember you're going to get the biggest fee you ever saw." Loring, inadvertently, had hit the right note.

"Of course, I cannot graciously refuse, if there are no legal obstacles."

"The only obstacle is Sprowle, who's been tipped off that this is the place the pair are probably headed for. He said he'd be here in three minutes, or he'd—well, I don't care to repeat his exact language."

"A profane and violent man," commented Doctor McCosh, shaking his head sadly.

"Well, you throw him off the scent somehow, and be ready for us. I'm going to deliver one bride and one groom at your doorstep f. o. b. in exactly twenty-two minutes—even if I have to scrap what's left of the car

afterward." Loring caught Marjorie by the arm and started for the door.

"Alas, I am already greatly upset——" began Doctor McCosh.

"It doesn't matter, so long as my car isn't. You take care of Sprowle!"

They were out of the door and scurrying down the walk to board the car.

"But, Keith! How did papa ever discover it?" demanded Marjorie.

Loring gave a mighty tug at the starter and sprang for his seat.

"It seems that Mildred left a note. I suppose some stupid maid delivered it too soon. He didn't explain that to Sprowle—— By Jove! If that's him now, we've got to race for it."

The flaring lights of a motor car had swept into view, bearing rapidly down upon them. Loring threw in his clutch, and the machine leaped forward. The beam of the approaching headlights was already upon them.

"Not a second too soon," murmured Loring. "Look back, Marjorie, and see if they stop at the parsonage."

"No, they've passed it. They're coming right on."

"Then, thank Heaven, it isn't Sprowle after all! Now for a new speed record between here and Plympton."

Loring let the car out for all it was worth, and for once the machine seemed to understand and respond to the frantic urgency of its driver. It tore along the road, fairly devouring it in its greed and tossing aloft a huge streamer of dust. Had it not been for the enveloping shades of the June night, Loring's progress might have visibly resembled a tornado moving across the Kansas plains.

"Mildred and Bert—eloping!" Marjorie, in the intervals of maintaining her seat in the lurching car, was trying mentally to grasp the portentous fact. "She might have told me—her own sister."

"And Duckworth might have given me a hint," grumbled Loring. "This just goes to show—— Steady now!"

he coaxed the machine as it rounded a bend of the road. "Some speed, eh?" he exclaimed delightedly. "Is that other car still in sight?"

Marjorie turned.

"Why, it's quite close behind us!"

"What?" exclaimed Loring incredulously. "What can they be letting out for?"

"I do believe they are trying to catch up," said Marjorie, looking back again at the two glaring eyes of the pursuing car.

"Great Scott! If it should be Sprowle!"

"But why should he be chasing us?"

"He must have seen us leave that preacher's house. If it's Sprowle, he thinks we're the runaway couple."

A raucous shout reached their ears above the roar of the car.

"That sounds like Mr. Sprowle," said Marjorie, when the loud bellow was heard again.

"We've got to beat him out—— But hold on! This won't do." Loring frowned suddenly. "This is the very worst thing we can do. We're simply leading him to Plympton—right into your sister and Duckworth."

"Oh, dear! Do turn off somewhere!" exclaimed Marjorie, awaking to this new peril. "We mustn't go to Plympton."

"And leave Bert and Mildred under arrest at the police station?"

Another shout was hurled at them from the car in the rear.

"This is a pretty kettle of fish!" declared Loring disgustedly. "Confound that fellow, why don't he burst a tire?"

"Oh, Keith, you must think of something!"

"I am thinking," muttered the man at the wheel. "If we go on to Plympton, we lead Sprowle right up to his quarry and the game is dished. If we lead him a chase in some other direction, Duckworth and Mildred are in a pretty box, with the chances that the

police will be calling up your house and making inquiries——"

"Oh, Keith, think hard!"

Loring, with set teeth, grimly wrestled with the horns of the dilemma.

"If there were some way of getting rid of Sprowle——"

"You were managing it so beautifully up to now," said the girl encouragingly.

Inspiration once more descended upon Loring.

"I've got it!"

"What?"

"An idea. Are you game——"

"Of course I'm game."

"Then, we'll let Sprowle overtake us and pretend we're the runaways ourselves."

"But he knows me——"

"That's the point. Your father didn't tell him it was Mildred. He only said 'my daughter.' You're his daughter, aren't you? And Sprowle saw us leave the parsonage. We'll simply confirm his assumption that we are already married, and that he has caught us too late. As soon as we're rid of him, we'll skip on to Plympton."

"But will he believe us?" Marjorie reflected uncertainly.

"He will, if you'll act the part."

"By saying we're married?"

"Merely saying it won't do. We've got to convince Sprowle that we have been married less than thirty minutes——clean gone on each other, and all that——the genuine mushy stuff. Can you?" demanded Loring, as Marjorie hesitated. "Otherwise, it's all up with Mildred and Duckworth."

Marjorie looked back again at the relentless pursuing car, and then reluctantly agreed. Loring began at once to reduce speed, and his arm slipped around Marjorie's waist.

The action brought her upright in quick protest.

"You don't have to begin already!"

"Rehearsals for this performance can't begin a second too soon," observed

the youth. "We'll need all the practice we can get if we're to put this over on Sprowle. Better start something yourself."

Marjorie pondered a moment, and then gingerly drooped toward Loring's shoulder. His grasp about her waist tightened.

"I love you," he said earnestly, looking down into her eyes lifted toward his and reflecting the starlight of the night.

"You don't have to say that until Mr. Sprowle can hear it," Marjorie calmly pointed out. "And whatever you do, don't you dare kiss me."

Mr. Sprowle drew alongside.

"I've been yelling at you for the last mile," he called morosely across at them. "You better stop a minute."

"That so? What is it?" demanded Loring cheerily.

The two cars came simultaneously to a halt.

"Why, it's Mr. Sprowle!" exclaimed Marjorie, in accents of surprise, as she regarded the sour-faced visage of the newcomer.

"Good evenin', Miss Blake," said Sprowle, stiffly touching the cap that covered his large, bullet-shaped head.

"But I'm not Miss Blake any more."

"She's Mrs. Keith Humiston Loring," announced her companion proudly, and his arm encircled her again.

Sprowle regarded the couple for a moment in glum silence, and then leaned over and spat reflectively into the road.

"Married, eh?"

"Not fifteen minutes ago!" exclaimed Marjorie ecstatically. "Oh, Mr. Sprowle——this is my——my husband, Mr. Loring."

Sprowle grunted a response to the introduction.

"How strange we should have met you here!" went on Marjorie politely.

"Well, I dunno," Sprowle answered slowly. "Fact is, I've been sent after you——"

Loring grimly held on, and when the next vicious kick came toward him, the rope caught the unruly leg.



"But we're married," protested Marjorie. "Oh, Keith dear——"

"Never mind, darling," Loring drew her protectingly toward him and leaned over to face Sprowle. "You're too late. We're man and wife now. But we'd be obliged if you would go back and tell Mr. Blake that we're all right, and hope he'll forgive us for taking matters into our own hands this way——"

Sprowle interjected a sour "Humph!" at this proposed embassy.

"My orders was to take Miss Blake home."

"But you can't stop us now. She's my wife," responded Loring with a show of warmth.

Sprowle took off his cap and scratched his head in perplexity.

"So that old geezer McCosh did the job, eh?"

"The Reverend Doctor McCosh married us—yes," replied Loring loftily. "Well," he went on impatiently, since

Sprowle remained as if in a quandary, "we'll say good night to you, Mr. Sprowle, and get along——"

"You hold on a minute." Sprowle got down from his car and came over to them. He scanned their faces in the clear starlight. "Of course, if you're married, I don't see that I can do anythin'——"

"You certainly can't!"

"And I'm not wantin' to butt into a mess a couple of young fools has cooked up for themselves——"

"Well, really, Mr. Sprowle——" Marjorie indignantly put in.

"Never mind, sweetheart." Loring cooed reassuringly to her for a moment, and she replied in kind, as if oblivious of any spectator.

Mr. Sprowle listened with undisguised disgust.

"This is no place for me. If you're married, you're married. Give me a look at your marriage certificate, and I quit."

"Why—yes," said Loring rather blankly. "Marjorie dear, the marriage certificate——"

Marjorie gave him a quick, despairing look, and began a fidgeting search for the paper, as if it were treasured somewhere about her.

"Didn't you put it in your pocket?" she asked imploringly.

Loring dived into his pockets.

"Did I have it? Well, it's around here somewhere. Confound it! Look here, Mr. Sprowle, we're late already, so if you don't mind——"

"I do mind," said Sprowle bluntly.

"Great Scott, man!" Loring exploded in righteous indignation. "You don't think for a minute we would tell you we were married if we weren't!"

"If you're married, you've got papers to show for it," retorted Sprowle doggedly.

"Well, we've got them all right, somewhere." Loring again went vigorously through his pockets, while Marjorie

nervously searched the seat and the floor of the car for the missing paper. "I wonder now." Loring became reflective. "It may be that I left the blooming thing on the parson's table—— in the hurry of getting away, you know."

"I noticed you left in an awful hurry," agreed Sprowle dryly. "It occurred to me that you mightn't have found the preacher at home, and were in an awful hurry to hunt up another."

His little piglike eyes were screwed shrewdly upon Loring, who, cursing under his breath, was tempted to plant a fist in the fat, impudent face.

"But he *was* at home!" declared Marjorie gulpingly, now on the verge of tears. "And he did marry us! Oh, I think you're just *horrid*, Mr. Sprowle—to doubt our word!" She buried her head, weeping, upon Loring's breast.

Loring glowered at the impassive Sprowle.

"You're a nice piece of work——" he began witheringly, and reached for the throttle of the car.

Sprowle instantly mounted the running board and arrested Loring's hand.

"Sorry to interfere, but I can't let you go till you've showed me that marriage certificate."

"But we left it at the preacher's house, I tell you! Go back and look at it, if you want to."

"Then you'll have to go back with me."

"But we're late now," fumed Loring.

"Can't help it," said the adamant Sprowle.

Loring turned irresolutely to Marjorie.

"Oh, yes, let's go back!" she burst out impetuously. "Anything to get away from this!"

Loring reluctantly backed his car around, and Sprowle did the same. They began to retrace the road over which they had come.



"What shall we ever do now?" asked Marjorie guardedly.

Sprole's machine closely trailed them.

"It's all up to the Reverend Doctor McCosh," gloomed Loring. "We may bluff this out yet, if he tumbles to the game we're playing and has gumption enough to lie like a good sport——"

"But he's a minister," observed Marjorie.

"That needn't disqualify him from showing a little horse sense in an important affair like this," replied Loring hopefully. "We've got to chance it, and at least we're getting Sprole away from Plympton."

"But we're not getting away from Mr. Sprole, and until we do—just think of poor Mildred and Mr. Duckworth—all this time!" lamented Marjorie.

Loring ground his teeth.

"I'm to be Duckworth's best man—and, by Jove, I'm going to be if I have to do murder!" he swore manfully. "I don't like putting it up to the minister this way, I must admit." There was silence in the car, but the frown on Loring's brow indicated that he was doing some hard thinking.

When the two cars drew up before the house of Doctor McCosh, Loring sprang out, hoping to anticipate Sprole, if only by a moment, in confronting the minister. But the bulky Sprole was close at his heels.

The astounded Doctor McCosh opened the door.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated, as the trio pressed eagerly in upon him.

Loring raised his voice to drown out Sprole's.

"This gentleman insists on your telling him that we're married. He won't take our word for it."

"They've got no marriage papers," said Sprole.

"The certificate you gave my wife, you remember," put in Loring quickly,

"could we have left it here after the ceremony?" He was endeavoring to convey frantic wireless communications to the perplexed clergyman. "We may have lost it along the road. However, if you'll only tell this man that we are married." With the eye that was out of Sprole's range, Loring winked imploringly.

"Why—bless my soul!" stammered the Reverend Doctor McCosh. "This is most extraordinary! I fail to understand——"

"It's only a matter of telling Mr. Sprole in a word that you married us. Then he'll leave us alone," Loring tried to help him.

"Quite so! Quite so!" Doctor McCosh took off his glasses and began to rub them fumblingly with his handkerchief. "Ah—I begin to comprehend. Pardon my seeming detachment. I was deeply engaged in literary work of importance, and this interruption——"

"Did you marry these folks, or didn't you?" demanded Sprole.

Doctor McCosh edged a little backward into the hall; he regarded Sprole frigidly.

"Your question is most categorical, sir. I was on the point of explaining to you that it is my habit to devote my evenings to compiling my 'Recollections of Glendale County'——"

"Glendale County be blowed!" broke in Sprole.

The telephone bell suddenly rang.

"Excuse me a moment," exclaimed the minister, starting up with the alacrity of a drowning man grabbing at a life belt suddenly thrown to him. Sprole, who was nearer the instrument, checked him.

"I'll answer this," and he took down the receiver. "Well?" There was a pause. "Doctor McCosh? . . . Yes, his house. . . . No, but . . . What's that? . . . Yes, go on. . . . I see. . . . What's

that? At the Plympton police station?" Marjorie gave a gasp:

"Now he'll learn everything!"

"It's all right . . . . You hold them . . . . No . . . . This is Sprowle. . . . I'll be right over. . . . I see, it's *Miss Blake* . . . . You wait . . . ."

Loring needed no commentary on these detached fragments bellowed over the wire, or the triumphant accent in Sprowle's voice. All hope of deception was gone, and in two minutes Sprowle would be tearing over to Plympton, where the runaways, hopelessly trapped, lay utterly at his mercy.

In a quick whirl of thought Loring's brain cleared to the realization that only action of the most desperate sort could save the situation now. He had a vague sense of Marjorie's pale face gazing beseechingly up at him, but his eye was calculatingly upon the bull-necked Sprowle at the telephone.

"He's got forty pounds the best of me in weight," he mentally appraised the burly figure, "but he's probably short of wind and scatterbrained in a mix-up." He coolly reached up and dragged the rope portières from the doorway.

As Sprowle hung up the receiver and started to turn round, one hundred and sixty pounds of ex-varsity beef, in a flying tackle, collided with him. He crumpled under the impact like cardboard and went down, the floor, the windows, the whole house, vibrating under the concussion. There was a flurry of arms and legs and innumerable flying strands of rope portière, a little shriek from Marjorie and a louder one from Mrs. Marsh, who came running in upon the scene. Then, out of the scuffling and confusion of the fray, it became clear that Loring had managed to pass a couple of hitches over Sprowle's wrists, pinioning them behind his back. Like an enraged bull, the prostrate Sprowle heaved and strained at the lashing, kicking out with both legs

at Loring, who clung to him, making frantic casts with further lengths of the portière at the limbs still rampant and at large. A choked, spluttering stream of profanity arose above the dust and din of the combat, causing the Reverend Doctor McCosh, with clasped hands and rooted to the spot, to gaze upward, with the rapt expression of a martyr, and to shudder visibly.

A loop of flying portière caught for an instant and held, but Sprowle frantically kicked free, struggling meanwhile to shake off his assailant. Loring grimly held on, half entangled in the portière himself, and when the next vicious kick came toward him, the rope caught the unruly leg. A dexterous hitch, and the other was secured; in a moment more he had Sprowle trussed up like a turkey. The helpless man, red of face and streaming at every pore, writhed in his bonds and between his



"Gone?" echoed Keith blankly. "Say—  
Don't shut that window!"

panthings called wrathfully upon his nine gods.

Loring leaped up from his labors, disheveled, but exultant. There was a wild look of triumph in his eye, and his words came short and peremptory.

"Now for the car and Plympton!" He brushed past the speechless, scandalized housekeeper, and caught hold of Marjorie's arm. "No telling how long that rope will hold. You've got to come, too." He forcibly laid hold of Doctor McCosh.

"Me?" quavered the frightened clergyman.

"Get your breviary, or signal-code book, or whatever you call it, and come!" commanded Loring. "You don't think for an instant I'd dare bring those people back here to be married—with that hydrophobia-stricken creature ready to crack loose at any moment? You've got to marry them in Plympton."

"But this is monstrous, unspeakable!"

"It's a bit out of the ordinary," admitted Loring, "but it's all in the day's work, and remember, you're going to get the biggest pay for overtime that was ever handed out to any one in your union." He clapped the limp shoulders of the doctor. "Any reason why you can't perform a marriage service in Plympton?"

"No, but——"

"Then come along," Loring urged him forward. "This yours?" He thrust upon him a black soft hat which he had caught down from the hall rack. "Come on. I'll explain everything during the ride."

"But I am too upset——"

"The night air will do you good," said Loring.

The reluctant divine was wedged into the car between Loring and Marjorie,



and the machine once more headed for Plympton, but he continued to emit a timorous stream of protest.

"My evening labors have been most disastrously interrupted," lamented Doctor McCosh, being propelled through space at the rate of forty miles an hour, and regretfully visioning the quiet solitude of—his deserted study; not without some

concern as to the possible future movements of the captive Sprowle, who had been unceremoniously abandoned where he lay, on the hall floor, an object of terror to the paralyzed housekeeper.

"You'll be back on your job again in an hour," Loring soothingly reassured him, "just as if nothing had happened."

"Ah, but my train of thought has been hopelessly disarranged, and I was at a most critical point in my—my reminiscences."

"Your what?"

Doctor McCosh was modestly abashed.

"My book is to be entitled 'Forty Years of Glendale County,' and in it figure largely my own personal experiences in this parish——"

"Why"—Loring was suddenly enthusiastic—"this night's business ought to make the most bang-up chapter in the whole book! Have you thought of that?"

"My dear sir, I do not yet understand what this is all about," fretted Doctor McCosh. "You come to my house with this young lady and say you are not married, and bolt out of it in the most extraordinary fashion. You are back in half an hour, brazenly declaring that you are married, and wishing me to corroborate the assertion, and after laying

violent hands on a fellow creature, you are off again——"

"Now listen, and I'll explain," interrupted Loring.

"He's really doing it all for the best," put in Marjorie.

"You'll approve of everything when you understand," Loring went on, "and it'll make a ripping chapter for that history of Glendale County."

"I fear you do not comprehend the proper scope of an historical work."

"Well, if we aren't making history to-night, I miss my guess," responded the youth. "And if that rope portière only holds—— By the way, what's left of it will make bully souvenirs, cut up and passed around among Duckworth's friends—sort of a substitute for wedding cake."

"Keith! The idea!" expostulated Marjorie.

"Is he not a little—ah—unbalanced?" Doctor McCosh addressed Marjorie in some concern.

"Keith, you must explain," the girl remonstrated.

Loring repressed himself, to sketch rapidly for the minister the sequence of events which had culminated at the latter's house, and the further program, hastily determined upon, which was to get Duckworth out of the toils of the Plympton police and into the toils of matrimony with the greatest possible speed, since danger of intervention was still imminent from two quarters—the bride's father and the already delegated Sprowle, whose imminent and furious pursuit was withheld only by the uncertain resistant qualities of Doctor McCosh's rope portière.

An occasional faintly glimmering window along the roadside presently marked their approach to Plympton. Loring relaxed the fast pace, and they bowled along a wide street heavily shaded with elms. A solitary pedestrian or two were visible. A motor car passed, headed in the opposite direction.

The clock on the tower of the old church facing the village square tolled the hour of ten as they drew up before their destination.

"This can't be the place! Why it's closed and dark!" exclaimed Marjorie in sharp disappointment, scanning the barred door and empty, lightless windows.

Loring, who had been calculating on bursting in upon the luckless Duckworth and his intended bride with dramatic effect, beat an impatient tattoo upon the door. The sound reverberated loudly and awoke sleepy echoes from the surrounding deserted square.

"Confound it! This town goes to bed awfully early!" he muttered, and renewed his pounding.

"Oh, Keith!" lamented Marjorie from the car. "They may have put Bert and Mildred in jail!"

"Nonsense!" replied Loring, but his misgivings increased. He pounded again.

A window on the floor above was creakingly raised.

"What do you want down there?" demanded a surly voice.

"There were two people in a car held up here by mistake——" began Loring.

"Say"—a head emerged with sudden, menacing interest—"if you're the smart Aleck that played that telephone trick, hanged if I don't come down and arrest you!"

"Oh, no!" said Keith quickly. "We're friends of the people you detained. We just now heard about it, and we came to get them released. It's all a mistake."

"Well, there's been trouble enough around here for one night! I'd like to get my hands on the blankety-blank idiot that started it!"

"But where are they—the people you detained?"

"Oh, they've gone."

"Gone?" echoed Keith blankly. "Say—— Don't shut that window!"

The head reemerged.

"They managed to get themselves identified and cleared out."

"When?"

"Oh, not ten minutes ago, just as we were closing up."

"But where did they go?" persisted Keith.

"Don't know, and don't care." The window slammed down conclusively.

"At least they've escaped from this dreadful place," gasped Marjorie in relief.

"But where have they gone?" demanded Loring blankly.

"Could it have been they in the car that passed us a few moments ago?" meekly inquired Doctor McCosh.

"Holy beeswax!" exclaimed Loring. "I never even looked!"

"It was quite dark, but I think it was a young man and a young woman."

"Then they're making straight for your house to get married, and they'll run bang into Sprowle!"

Loring wrenched the starter and catapulted into the car.

"Holy mother of Mike!" he groaned, peering sharply ahead as the machine increased its speed, in utter defiance of Plympton's strict regulations. "This mess gets thicker every minute! They'll walk right into Sprowle. Probably help him untangle himself from that rope portière before they know what's up. We've simply got to overtake them!"

The Reverend McCosh, clutching at his hat in the fierce current of air that breasted them, feebly protested.

"Are we not going dangerously fast?"

"We're going like hell!" said Loring between his teeth. "We've got to."

"But," gasped Doctor McCosh, quite ignoring Loring's language in the extremity, "we are in imminent danger of instantly losing our lives——"

"Oh, Keith, do be careful!" Marjorie softly implored.

"Trust me, little girl," said Loring gently.

"I implore you, sir, if you have any consideration for me——"

"Well, don't it look as if I have?" cut in Loring. "Tearing all over the county and risking my neck just to land this job for you that will put a small gold mine in your pocket, if I can ever get you to it. You've only got to sit tight and——"

"But I find it impossible—to sit tight," spluttered the doctor, as the machine bounded on, heedless of the road's inequalities. "I regret that I permitted myself to venture out upon this preposterous undertaking."

"You seem to forget how it's going to brace up that 'Forty Years of Glendale County.' Why, it'll sell on the news stands if you get this night's business written up with the proper ginger. And besides, if we catch that car, you stand to make a lot of money."

"I desire only a just recompense."

"But if we don't catch that car, there'll be the devil to pay, and I'd much rather settle with you," said Loring.

Another mile of road lay behind them, a cloud of furiously agitated dust slowly resettling in their wake, but the hoped for gleam of a red tail light on the road ahead failed to appear. They were rapidly nearing Glendale Mills.

Loring, with deepening misgivings, shook his head.

"If we don't overtake them in the next mile, it's all off."

"But we can't be far behind," said Marjorie hopefully. "And even if they reach the parsonage first——"

"Sprowle will be ready to grab them."

"But you can tie him up again," said Marjorie.

"Oh! Of course!" replied Loring, a bit staggered, but unable to refute this calm suggestion.

Doctor McCosh piped up in alarm:

"I cannot again permit my abode to be the scene of such a gladiatorial brawl!"

Just then the road swerved abruptly,



and the acetylenes flashed upon a car halted some distance ahead. Loring recognized Duckworth bending over the hood. He gave a wild whoop, and tooted lustily upon the horn. Duckworth, startled, leaped into the car as if to take again to flight.

"Hold on, Duck, it's us!" yelled Loring.

Duckworth, utterly astounded, and blinking into the glare of the headlights of the car that had come up and halted, saw Loring and Marjorie, suddenly silhouetted within the flood of light, come running toward him.

"You? Loring——"

"Mildred!" The two sisters were speedily clutched in each other's arms.

"Look here, old man." Duckworth suspiciously surveyed his friend. "I know you mean well by butting in this way, but our minds are quite made up, and you couldn't stop us if you argued a hundred years——"

"Stop you!" echoed Loring. "Pull that bulldog look off your face, and listen! The only man that wants to stop this performance is tangled up in a rope portière at the parsonage in Glendale Mills."

"It's Mr. Sprowle," explained Marjorie. "Oh, Mildred! Papa has found out and telephoned him to stop you and——"

"To forbid the banns, you know," put in Loring dramatically.

"And Keith tied him up beautifully!"

Duckworth and Mildred could only stare dumfoundedly at the two speakers.

"At the parsonage—Doctor McCosh's?" asked Duckworth. "But that's where we're going to be married!"

"Not on your life! You're going to be married right here," replied Loring.

Duckworth turned blankly upon him.

"Have you gone batty, or is this your idea of a joke?"

"You'll find it's no joke if Sprowle gets loose and comes tearing along here any moment. You two line up by the fence——"

"But the minister——"

"We've brought him along. Marjorie and I will be witnesses. Everything is provided for but the marriage license."

"Well, I've got that," said Duckworth. "But there's a lot of things about this I don't understand."

Loring caught him by the arm.

"No time for that, old man. You can read all about it some day in Doctor McCosh's 'Forty Years of Glendale County.'"

Marjorie and Loring, once more alone by the roadside, watched the red tail light of Duckworth's car disappear in the distance. In the opposite direction Doctor McCosh, lavishly rewarded for his nocturnal services, had already departed on foot toward his house. The two stood silently watching until the tiny red eye winked and vanished in the darkness, and the faint sound of the car was lost in the still night air. Marjorie, clasping Loring's arm and using Loring's handkerchief, wiped away a truant tear or two that had risen to her eyes during the hurried congratulations and good-bys. She smiled at him a little forlornly.

"Well, that settles *them*," said Loring. "But how about us? We're as good as engaged, aren't we?"

Marjorie drew a long breath.

"Well, I should hope so!" she said.



# The Red Days

By William Harper Dean

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

A serious love story—the terrible red days that went to the making of a writer's success, an unusual heroine and her sacrifice, are the things that make this story a memorable one.

FOR a full half hour Robert Carmichael had sat silent in the deep chair before the open fire, head thrown back, eyes closed dreamily. The girl who sat beside him, pen poised over notebook, moved slightly in her chair.

Carmichael opened his eyes.

"I think I have it now," he said a little wearily. Then he dictated: "The shadows had faded; chill dusk let down. Below, the river's murmured dirge mingled with the sigh of the night wind through the pines. A single star peeped timidly over the hills."

A long pause, with the crackling fire alone breaking the silence. Then:

"A red moon mounted above the star. A screech owl floated silently into the great oak overhead and startled the newborn night with its wail. But the man who lay prone at the foot of the oak moved not. For this was the hour of his wrestle with God; this lonely spot his Gethsemane."

Carmichael rose wearily and stood with his back to the blaze. His tired eyes roamed here and there over the room that was half studio, half office. They rested on the girl who sat facing him.

"I'm afraid that will be all to-day, Miss Helen," he said. "I've run down."

The girl closed her notebook and looked up at him. The firelight illumined a pair of deep gray eyes and sent a hundred lights flitting over her brown hair. Hers was a countenance

stamped with the die of deep character, gently born.

The mouth might have been patterned for tenderness, passion, or even weakness, what with its thinly cut red lips and its corners drooping ever so slightly. But if the mouth gave token of these things, the cleft chin bespoke power and reserve; the finely sculptured nose, though delicately expressive of sensitiveness, yet bore the lines of courage and even obstinacy.

For five years Carmichael had studied her countenance, even as he studied it now, yet each day he had read something new there. Now, as he squared his broad shoulders and smiled handsomely at her, the thought of it came to him.

"Firelight," he said dreamily, "unmasks you. I never saw you look quite so wonderful as you do now."

A barely perceptible color stained her cheeks; her eyes drooped under his gaze.

"I was thinking," she said quietly, sheathing her pen. "Did you say that was all?"

"All," he repeated. His lip curled as he shifted his gaze to another part of the room. "I'm as barren of inspiration as you are of sentiment."

Had he watched her, he would have seen her recoil as if from a blow. The slow color faded from her cheeks. She gathered up her notebook and crossed



"I'm as barren of inspiration as you are of sentiment."

the room to a mahogany desk under a flood of incandescent light.

Carmichael's gaze followed her slender, supple figure in its black silk waist,

touched with white at throat and wrists, and short checkered skirt. Then he sank once more into the chair he had vacated.

It was not yet four o'clock, but the sullen winter sky reflected its gloom through the partly curtained windows. The day was far from spent, but Carmichael's day was done. This was happening often now—this sudden relaxation of his high-strung imagination, this sudden flatness in his imagery, this swift draft of ideas. It used to be that—

He pressed his lips together as if in pain, and looked over at the girl. She was ever the same; *she* never let down. But then why should she? Hers was a task of routine; his, one of creation. Therein—the thought consoled him—lay the answer.

She had come to Carmichael one day as he had sat in a miserable cubby-hole of an office, hammering away for dear life at a typewriter, with neither thought nor fear of the morrow, working twelve hours a day by virtue of an all-sufficient faith in himself as a writer. She had come to him in that early day in his new-sought career and asked for work. Carmichael, laughing impishly, had jingled before her serious gray eyes three quarters and as many pennies. What had he cared in those days?

And he had told her everything—how he had turned his back upon something sure, to prove his contention that it was in him to write; how he had engaged the little kennel of an office with no idea how the rent would be paid; how he was living on doughnuts and coffee; how there wasn't enough money in the firm of Robert Carmichael, Ltd. to guarantee her first week's salary. And to top off the story, he had pointed to a stack of rejected manuscripts and turned down both his thumbs.

She had heard him through without comment. At the close of his narrative, she had calmly removed her hat and gloves. She, too, was just starting out for herself, she had told him in her calm, serious way. If he had so much

faith in himself, she would share it. Would he take her?

And finally his work had sold—aye, better yet, his books had been sought. Fame had come; not overnight, as some would have it—those who knew nothing of the smiling tragedy of those first years in the dingy little office—but no matter; it had come.

It was here, all about him. Carmichael let his eyes wander about the room. It was a rich, massive room, with its dull mahogany and deep Persian rugs, mellow inverted lights suspended from heavy rafters, the subtle perfume of fresh flowers.

But something else crept into Carmichael's heart and chilled it. His work was standing still. Day after day he had fought against this gnawing truth. Swiftly he reviewed in vision the product of his work these past six months. There passed before him a stupid pageant of flat, prosaic sentiments, awkwardly expressed, trite, hackneyed expressions, weak plots—

"Full of sound and fury," he muttered grimly, "'signifying nothing.'"

He was running down, and the thought of it stung him to the quick. Oh, to get back into the old, deep currents of creative thought and again shoot the rapids of an unexplored imagination!

His broodings came to a sudden halt as the door swung open and a wiry little man with hat and fur coat over his arm brisked into the room and threw these into a chair. Straight he made for the mahogany cellaret near the fireplace.

"Thanks awfully, Bobby!" he called, to an accompaniment of tinkling glass. "You're the purling brook in a thirsty land. Just going out. Day's over, you know!"

He raised his glass and held it before the firelight.

"Laurels and thorns, wealth and rags, summer morn and Stygian night, mel-

low age and blasted youth—all in one. To the genius who drains the good and lets the corruption go!"

He drained the glass and deliberately smashed it against one of the big brass andirons.

"All rights reserved, including that of translation into foreign languages, including the Scandinavian!" he chattered, extending his lean hand to Carmichael, who had risen to greet him.

"And what of those who don't know it for what it is, Tupper?"

The two men stood with their backs to the fire, Carmichael's youthful figure towering above little Tupper's.

"Those," said Tupper, rocking contentedly on his heels, "those are——"

He looked up at Carmichael, hesitating.

"Out with it."

"Parodies on intellectuality—thrice accursed! You've quit, you know, Bobby."

"You flatter yourself," said Carmichael.

"Not flattery, but self-appraisal. When I discover that I can no longer decant off the virtue of it from the dregs, then I'll quit—just as you did, you know."

"If you can," added Carmichael. "If you can!"

Tupper turned and fixed Carmichael with the keenest gaze.

"If I can't, then it's best that I go down with it. A man without a will is not worth salvaging. But I didn't stop by to barter twopenny philosophy. I'm on my way to dinner—a good one, too. Come along. As I observed some time ago, the day's over."

Carmichael sank into the depths of the leather chair and shook his head.

"I'm glad you happened in, Tupper," he said.

"What's up?"

"Something's wrong with me. I want you to diagnose it. The fact is

I'm beginning to discover that I'm running down—up here."

He tapped his forehead significantly.

"Not running down, but drying up. You're living a one-man existence. Men in our work must mix and mingle, cool and blister our tongues with the nectar and acid of life, or else lose our sense of values."

"That's beside the point. Tell me, Tupper, when you drink—that is, when it's running through your veins and brain—can you think constructively? Can you write clearly? Are your images sharply defined? Do you write with a touch that pleases you when you read it again in cold blood?"

Tupper nodded impatiently.

"It doesn't affect my creative genius, if you please. I wrote my best seller in a mist of absinth. I wrote another equally as good in a deluge of lithia. You don't mean to say that you——"

The muscles in Carmichael's face were twitching convulsively.

"Listen, Tupper. When I was drinking, my imagination seethed, my technique was at its best. I dictated my thoughts in a sort of haze, not remembering a word I said, simply recalling the sensation of the theme running smoothly through my brain. The expression of my thoughts in words came automatically. Later, when I would look over what I had done, I was amazed. My work had never been better.

"But then I got frightened and quit"—he snapped his fingers—"like that. For more than six months, now, I haven't been nearer it than I am now."

He drew his handkerchief and blotted the perspiration from his brow.

"Now I swear to you I am running down. I can see it every day when I dictate. I see it the next day when I read over the transcriptions. My work is flat, Tupper, flat! I've had a letter from my publishers. They've seen this and warned me.





"To the genius who drains the good and lets the corruption go!"

"I don't want to go back to the thing, Tupper, but my pride will not stand failure. It made me, and now the lack of it is unmaking me!"

Little Tupper ceased rocking on his heels. Very slowly he extracted a silver case from his pocket and lighted a cigarette. He looked across the room to where the girl was bending over her notebook. For some minutes her typewriter had been silent.

"I'm sorry, Bobby," said Tupper, blowing a smoke ring. "We're different, you and I."

"How different?"

"I never drink for inspiration. I flatter myself with thinking I don't need to. I drink because I am full of energy and ambition; I drink because

the act in itself and the reflex action of the drink absorbs an excess of nervous energy. I might burn this energy out in the open—riding and such things, you know—but one can't always spare the time. So I drink.

"Look at Fallon. He hasn't taken a drink in five years. I don't believe he'll ever take another. He has lost his desire for it, and that means he has lost the nervous energy that once made him a writer. Can he write now? Read his vapid, clammy, lifeless stuff! He's this moment penning his swan song. Don't you see?"

"Bobby, when the day comes when I have no earthly desire to drink, I hope my royalties will be coming in thick and fast, for I'll need them to keep me out

of the poorhouse. My day as a writer will be over."

Tupper tossed his cigarette into the fire and smiled at Carmichael.

"Well," said Carmichael nervously, "the verdict. Let me have it."

"I'm not qualified——"

"Tupper, you've earned a reputation for brutal candor. Live up to it—now!"

Tupper's eyes narrowed coldly.

"So you want it, do you? You sit there and tell me that the stuff is your inspiration, that without it you blunder along half efficient. You confess your brain quickens and yields its best only under forced draft. Then listen to me. Drive ahead under forced draft for all that's in you. You won't last long; you'll soon burn out. And there will be nothing left but the gray ashes and clinkers of a creative genius."

"Make the best of your deplorable lot. Use the stuff and bless it while it is making you; curse it when it has ruined you, even as you may thank me now and damn me then for this advice. You asked for this, you know."

Carmichael's fists were clenched tight; his knuckles whitened under the tension. He nodded at Tupper without looking at him.

"See you to-morrow," he said thickly.

Tupper gathered up his coat and hat and tripped out.

Some time later, Carmichael came out of a red chaos to realize that the room was very still, that the fire had burned down to glowing coals, that his hand rested upon the neck of the cut-glass decanter at his side.

He looked at his watch. Then he caught sight of the girl, bending silently over her desk. He went over to her.

"I beg your pardon," he said a little huskily. "I had no idea it was so late. You should have left without waiting for me to tell you. It's after six o'clock."

She did not look at him, but got up and walked slowly to where Tupper had

stood before the fire. She stood there with her back to him, looking down at the red coals.

Carmichael's eyes never left her. As he looked, she seemed taller, her figure more supple, her face mutely expressive of something unfathomable to his mind. Always she perplexed him.

Suddenly she turned, and her gray eyes met his own. Her face had paled, and he shrank under her gaze.

"Why did you listen to Tupper?" she said, her voice richly vibrant.

"I—— You heard?"

"I had to listen," she said, her hands clasping and unclasping. "I had to wait to—to speak with you."

He laughed nervously and walked across to her.

"You had to speak? I don't understand."

For an instant her eyes drooped under his mirthless smile, but as quickly lifted and flamed afresh.

"Yes," she said, with a little catch in her voice, "about Tupper."

"Yes? What about Tupper?"

"He's dangerous—he'd destroy you! Please don't listen to him!"

Her lithe figure had drawn tense, her lips quivered.

"Oh, come now!" Carmichael reached over and placed the stopper in the mouth of the decanter. "You shouldn't jump at conclusions. Tupper and I are the best of friends, and Tupper is a man of tremendous intellect. I'm sure he has no designs upon my body or," he added, smiling, "my soul. We understand each other, Tupper and I."

"Perhaps," she said quickly. "That is, you understand Tupper, and Tupper thinks he understands you. Wouldn't it be better if—if you understood yourself?"

Carmichael frowned.

"Won't you sit down?" he said, motioning toward the chair. "I'm rather

confused. It's been a long while since we engaged in personalities."

She flinched.

"No, I prefer to stand. It has been a long while since you and I became personal, but I think you—you need me——"

He took a step nearer and reached out his hands to her.

"I've always needed you, Helen, but you would have none of me——"

She warded him off with open palms.

"No, no; not that! You don't understand. You need me—differently. You need me because you don't know yourself, and I do." Her eyes were beseeching, her voice tremulous. "You think you know yourself, you credit Tupper with knowing you. Yet you think I could work by your side day after day and learn nothing but my work. Won't you listen to what I have to say? It's I who understand you, Rob!" she stammered, her cheeks glowing.

"Go on," he said, his hand on the back of the chair.

"You told me once that you loved me——"

"It was true—is now!" he said hotly.

She ignored his words.

"Can you recall the exact circumstances?"

"Yes," he cried, putting aside her outstretched hand and seizing her arm with both hands. "You are beautiful, holy;

I am human. There!" he said bitterly, releasing her arm.

"Not that. You told me after we had come here—not in the old days. Oh, Rob, don't you remember it all? Don't you remember how we had worked, you and I, so hard and long in the little, dreary office where I first came to you, full of faith and hope? Don't you remember how, when your work failed, I shouldered my share of the consequences; how I



A sudden, inarticulate cry escaped Carmichael. His hands shook as with palsy.

walked each day back and forth from my little room to that office? Don't you remember that sometimes we both were hungry, you and I, and how shabby our clothes were? Don't you?"

He nodded in silence.

"But we worked on and on and on, Rob. And then success came."



One twitching hand caught the thing and sent it crashing against the back of the fireplace.

She stopped suddenly and read his eyes. They were filled with pain.

"That first success came honestly," she went on, her breath coming fast. "I was proud of you. I had put my faith in you and cast my lot with it. You justified it all. I loved you then," she said brokenly. "Oh, how I loved you! You did not love me—then!" The tears were glistening in her eyes.

He made as if to put his arm around her, but she shrank back.

"Don't," she said huskily, turning. "Let me go on. Success brought us here, where the finger prints of poverty were hidden under rich wood and soft lights. We were cast into another world. Success intoxicated you. Your

youth and its clear, clean brain quivered with dangerous excitement. Your pent-up emotions sought new outlets. You began to drink—cheerfully, innocently, simply because your soul and body craved the added excitement. From that day you began to destroy yourself. You had let success master you."

Now she let the tears have their way.

"It was then," she sobbed, burying her face in her hands, "it

was then you said you loved me!"

His arm went around her and drew her head against his breast. She did not rebel; but buried her head there, while the sobs shook her fearfully.

"I meant it. I mean it now, Helen," he was saying, with suffering written in his every feature. "But you have tried to kill that love. You say you loved me back there in the old days—I don't understand. You say I was destroying myself. My God, Helen, do you call my work then a failure? Haven't you seen how different my work is now, since I left that alone?" His eyes sought the decanter, scintillating under the light. "You who see everything, you must have seen this."

"Stop!"

She freed herself and stepped back, unmindful of the tears that stained her cheeks.

"You don't know what it is costing me to say these things, but I must finish. You asked me to love you—to marry you. What did I answer? Just this: 'Not now, but when you find yourself again!'"

"You didn't understand. You didn't know that you were not the same Robert Carmichael of the old struggling days. You didn't know that you had found yourself only to lose yourself again. You thought I had no love in me for you; you thought I was cold—a lifeless, inhuman machine!"

"Do you think I could have shared your hopes and disappointments, your successes and failures, and not have cared? Do you think the woman lives who could do that? I did care. But I cared too much to let my love go out to you then, before you were your own master. Love born then would not have been a lasting love, Rob—no more lasting than the success you won when your brain was fired by *that*!"

She turned and cast a frightened glance at the shimmering decanter. He stood with arms limp at his sides. He did not look up to meet her eyes.

"In those red days I waited for the turn. It came. Your better self came into its own, and your manhood awoke. You stopped drinking. You have been our own master until to-day——"

"And," he added hoarsely, steadying himself at the chair, "slipping back! Forced draft, as Tupper says, brings out the possibilities in me. It's not right, but I must go that way. My pride won't stand defeat—no matter what the cost."

"In the old days, Rob, back in the little office, was it forced draft that brought the first success, or was it just Robert Carmichael, clear-headed and clear-eyed? Answer me, Rob?"

"You have said it," he muttered. "But I've changed."

For a moment she looked down at the floor, her lips pressed tightly as she struggled within herself. Then she walked to her desk and opened a drawer. She took out a bulky package and unwrapped it. From the same drawer she took a book. She came back to him.

"Sit down, Rob."

She gently forced him into the chair, meeting his wondering gaze with eyes that were melting with compassion.

"This is the success of the red days," she said, placing the book in his hand. "This is the work you did while you drank."

He took the book from her hands and nodded dully.

"You know it by heart. You dictated it when you were—when you were——"

"Yes, yes," he cried. "Doesn't it prove——"

She handed him the bulky manuscript.

"This is the work as you dictated it."

He took the manuscript from her hands, glancing at it curiously. She turned her back and stood with her hands clenched at her sides.

A sudden, inarticulate cry escaped Carmichael. His hands shook as with palsy. A handful of typewritten sheets fluttered to the floor.

"Helen!"

She did not move.

"Helen!"

The book and the manuscript slid to the floor. He was on his feet. He caught her by the shoulders and turned her. At arm's length he held her, as, with drawn face and white lips, he stared into her brimming eyes.

"Helen!" he cried hoarsely. "You—you did *that*?"

She raised her eyes to his. They were gloriously tender now.

"Yes, Rob."



"Tell me—tell me!" He shook her fiercely.

"Don't you understand—now? You told Tupper that at those times the thoughts ran through your brain, that the words came mechanically. And all the time—— Oh, Rob, if you only knew the pain I've suffered hearing you trying to free your poor, shackled thoughts! If you only knew the ache in my heart as I took them down! How I pitied you! How I feared for you!"

"I worked for you—sometimes all through the night, writing the things you *might* have said—that you wanted to say—that you would have said back in the old days. I meant to tell you, but you took the work—my work—and it made you happy. I couldn't disillusion you. Oh, I wish I had——"

Her voice died in her throat. He felt her quiver in his grasp. Her eyes were closed, and her breath came long and deep.

But Carmichael's nerveless hands slid from her shoulders. His knees buckled under him, and he dropped limply into the chair. His head drooped forward and buried itself in his arms, while his big frame shook convulsively.

"God," he was choking, "have pity!"

She was on her knees beside him now.

"Don't you see, Rob," she whispered hotly into his ear, "it was love! Love gave me the power to do your work for you—love and a faith that could not be shaken. You thought there was no love in me, when every moment I was tortured with it, but would not give it to you until you were mine—*mine*, not the Thing's!" Her lips were close to

his cheek. He breathed the warm fragrance of them. "Mine—Rob Carmichael of the old days, the brave days, when you alone were sufficient unto the task.

"And don't you see what lies before us? We're back again, Rob, just where we started—full of hope and faith! Don't you see that the fight has just begun? Fight, Rob, fight! Fight with strong heart and clear head as you fought in the old days! I'll stand at your side, Rob!"

Her voice had trailed into a whisper. Slowly he raised his shamed, haggard face and drew her head against his cheek.

Late that night Robert Carmichael raised his head from his arms. He was alone. His gaze traveled slowly from the lifeless ashes in the fireplace until it rested upon the cut-glass decanter at his side.

A half sob clicked in his throat. One twitching hand caught the thing and sent it crashing against the back of the fireplace. A hidden ember hissed menacingly. The next moment the dead ashes sprang to life in clearest white flames that pulsed across them. Then they died.

Carmichael turned from the dead ashes. His jaw was set as of old. The clear radiance of faith and love was in his eyes. He walked across to her desk and picked up the little silver vase with its single white rose. He crushed the rose to his lips. His eyes closed.

"Her fight—her victory," he whispered to the mangled petals. "*Fides intacta!*"



# The True Romance

By Genevieve Scott

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

The end of the "Ethelberta heroine," with her foolish, romantic ideas of love—a story whose first part attracted attention in the July number of SMITH'S.

## IV.

MARION and Roland were not to be married for three years.

What I went through in those three years it would be impossible ever to write down. I lived still in a world of romance. I bore all this sorrow with a high head, just as ladies in books are wont to do. That was a point of pride with me, of course; and I believe I even outdid what Ethelberta might have done under the same sorry circumstances.

By and by, I went to a great city to earn my living. I think I wanted to get as far as I could from the river and the old associations and the moonlit fields.

There were days when it seemed to me I would have been thankful to lie down and die; but I went about, nevertheless, as a heroine in a book would have done, hiding all this under a smiling demeanor.

It was a point of pride with me to keep on with my friendship with Roland. We corresponded infrequently—but I still kept his letters, and the days when they came were days that I looked forward to and back upon.

Then one morning came a letter from Marion. That strange, unbelievable morning! I can still remember everything about it with a kind of morbid vividness. I could tell you the very notes the little canary in the gold cage was singing when I opened the letter and my glance fell on the unbelievable words. Roland was dead.

In all the strange tides of feeling

that swept over me for two or three days after that, I hardly know what I went through. I only know that finally it seemed to me that fearful as it was—this sense that he was gone—and that the lovely things of the earth would see him no more, there was a sense, too, of something gained. Death had given him back to me. It seemed to me now that I was more free to love him. It was as if he had been taken from me for all time, but given to me for eternity.

Since he was gone, everything seemed changed. It seemed now that I had the right to love him. I brought out his photograph, which I had laid away. If my idea of love and loyalty and fidelity needed anything added to it, it was added now. I would be loyal and faithful myself until death; and some day, in another life, I would tell him of all my long and hidden love for him.

Two years later Marion married. It was no shock to me; rather, a confirmation of all my ideas. I had always felt that he was mine, mine, mine; here was the proof of it. She could never have given him such love as I gave him, else she could never have loved any one else. He was mine indeed now.

Meantime my work broadened out, and I was thrown in contact with others. Two men loved me and asked me to marry them. You can fancy what my answer was. Then at last there came another—Edgar Marshall. He was a man of great abilities, an architect, a widower. I suppose I was



So I sat and dreamed of Roland while  
he talked.

drawn to him a little by this last fact. I knew that he had been very devoted to his wife; the sorrow of his loss was something like my own.

He was working very hard. He used to get a worn look in his face that I understood only too well. It is the reflex, I told myself, of a long and abiding sorrow in the heart.

One day in spring he came to see me and begged me to go for the afternoon to the sea with him.

"You've been working hard and so have I," he said. "Let's go to the immortal sea—and rest our souls."

Somehow the phrase itself rested and attracted me. Some immortal seashore of the spirit, away from all the hurly-burly of the city, where I could seem

to be with Roland, was precisely what I longed for; and Edgar Marshall, too, wanted to get away with his memories, no doubt.

It was a glorious day—blue sky, white clouds, and a breeze so soft, so beautiful, that it seemed blowing off some heavenly shore. The sun was deliciously warm, and the sea a deep sapphire.

Edgar Marshall spread his overcoat on the sands, and we sat and watched for a long, long time the lovely, lazy water and the sea birds that from time to time skimmed the waves. He had a poet's tastes. He knew much poetry, and he quoted now line after line of charming verse about the sea.

The day had for me an exquisite

melancholy. My own life lay behind me, it seemed, over the sand dunes, where I need not remember it, and ahead of me, as ahead of Edgar Marshall, who sat beside me, lay the broad stretch of the infinite and the dream of love reunited in some far-off life. So I sat and dreamed of Roland while he talked.

One rarely knows how such things come about; but at last all this that he had been quoting as to the beauty and wonder of the sea turned toward me. In a few moments he was telling me—not hotly or passionately, but delicately and exquisitely—what I had come to mean in his life.

I do not believe that any woman who is honest with herself ever dislikes the homage of a really fine man. But, you see, I was not honest with myself. And, besides, my shadowy heroines of fiction looked down in real scorn on a man who did not stay true to his dead love!

But of me they could be sure! Me they had trained well! I was not the one to desert their teachings! I answered him gently, but with fine decision—that I could not possibly care for him.

He had wonderful gray eyes that searched you, kindly, but so deeply. He questioned me a little, and urged me to give reasons. Would I be frank with him? He leaned forward and looked at me with a look I shall not forget.

"Be honest with me," he said. "Is it because you do not believe in second love or second marriages?"

I drooped my head in answer, and admitted that it was—that it was unthinkable to me, this loving again. He looked out to sea, as if he were taking in the wide, wide stretch of it, quite over to the horizon.

"I see. I see," he said at last. "You are not ready yet to admit life to be as large as it really is. You still want to keep it within the bounds of a personal

and narrow ideal. But life is not like that, my dear, and love is not either. Life itself, with all its glory and its beauty, is larger than any one experience that can affect us personally, however large that may seem."

I looked out over the sea, confident that I knew and loved better than he.

"She to whom my life was for years dedicated was as fair and as beautiful as any man could deserve," he continued. "If she had lived, we would have gone on together, on and on. But this was not to be. There was another fate reserved to me, the fate of recognizing and loving you. Ten years have gone over me since she went away—ten years of suffering and learning; and out of all this suffering and learning I have come to know that no sorrow of mine can dwarf the glory of life. And so I found you, and found that there was joy and beauty and glory in life—and love in it—for me still, if you would give these things to me."

I shook my head. What the old heroines had taught me—Ethelberta and the rest—could not be swept away by even so large and beautiful a nature as his. I think it might have been Ethelberta herself who spoke.

"I do not pretend to judge for others," I said. "I only know that, having loved and lost myself, I cannot, cannot forget."

He looked at me with sharp, swift pain. I knew it was the thing he had feared.

"I dreaded this," he said at last. "But, oh, not so much for myself, my dear, though it robs my skies of light—but more for yourself! I have watched you. I know well how intense you are. You are young, you are beautiful, you are fit for love and all a woman's full, rich life; and you are willing to cloister yourself in some such gray-walled idea as this—some idea of undying devotion. That is not life, my dear—not life; it is romance."

His words ended. They had stirred me strangely. I felt the power of his stronger, nobler nature. But the old unrealities and romance stood there still in my life. I shook my head. Again—I know it now—I was Ethelberta. This is what Ethelberta would have said under just such circumstances:

"You must not, must not speak to me of these things. It pains me inexpressibly. I cannot, cannot forget him, I shall never be able to."

Edgar Marshall and I walked across the dunes and along the path by the marshes over to the little railway station. His face was fine and white. He respected what I had said, and we spoke no more of it.

#### V.

That night, as I lay tossing and sleepless, his words came back to me again and again. I would turn away from them, but again memory would offer them to me. What fine, strong words they were, and spoken with such dignity and simplicity! But I put them away. People who spoke like that could know very little, after all, about love. Still, the look of his face and the sound of his voice would return to me. I know now that it was the more healthy and normal and womanly part of my nature making its strong appeal to my old, pale-faced, romantic self.

But it was not my normal, healthy self that I wanted to see triumph. I wanted still the old romance. So I succeeded at last in putting the other away. Turning on my pillow, it seemed to me—as I closed my tired eyes and felt the first drowsiness of sleep upon them—it seemed to me that my lips touched once more with the old passionate love and longing the lips of my spirit lover.

I thought then that I was being ideally loyal and true. I know now that I was betraying myself, that I was lying

to myself as I had done for years. I was putting away from me the thing that a woman's soul most longs for and pretending that I did not want it. I was pushing from me all the richest beauty and service that life can bring a woman, to bow down to a romantic ideal that I had borrowed from fiction.

I know now how good and true Edgar Marshall was. He was not timid and shrinking and cowardly, as I had been. He was not trying to compress all of life into his own personal experience or sorrow as I had done! He was not letting romance stand for reality and for life itself. I was unconsciously playing a part, but he was living and experiencing and loving largely and very really.

One day a friend of his came to see me, to tell me that Edgar Marshall was ill—even desperately ill. Mr. Cranby was an interesting man with a keen, fine face; but the thing that you were most aware of, after five minutes' talk, was that he was Edgar Marshall's friend. I knew that, by the sense of that fine friendship, he had guessed nearly all of what lay between Edgar Marshall and me.

"You understand," he said earnestly, "that he would be the very last to send me. I came entirely of my own accord. I have known him always. I want to tell you what I know of him."

He hurried on. He told me things of beauty and nobleness in Edgar Marshall's life that it seemed to me my soul had already guessed. He told me of suffering, too—such suffering as I had not dreamed. Then he told me of Edgar Marshall's dreams and longings. He seemed to heap all these things up in front of me, like so many riches, as some teller of an old tale might do; and then he made me see that, in offering me love, Edgar Marshall had laid all these things at my feet.

"But, oh, it is not that," he said at last. "It is not that he can give you



such riches of the spirit. It is not that which has made me come to you to-day. It is because of what you can bring him. It is because of his need, his need that in itself could bless even the most wonderful and spiritual of women." He paused, and then, with entire directness: "It is to me inconceivable that any woman could find it in her heart not to love him."

"There may have been another love first," I said, shaken by all this; "another love that keeps its hand on one, even from another land—a land of the spirit."

It was this frankness on my part, of course, that made him feel he could speak as he then began to speak to me. He spoke earnestly, searchingly, at last even a little harshly, yet kindly, too. He imagined my youth as it had indeed been—one full of imaginary love affairs and romance. He pointed out how prone the human heart is, especially the heart of a young girl, to prefer romance to reality.

"That false idea of romance," he continued, "has spoiled many a life. It has to account for many a lonely and barren life, for many a fine man refused, because he does not happen to measure up to some romantic preconceived ideal. There are married women, too, who cheat their husbands of full happiness by secretly paying homage to some first love or lost love whom they vest with a hundred imaginary virtues.

8



I slipped down on my knees before them, and I laid my hand against that white hand, and then my cheek.

There are many wives to-day doing that. It is as unfair as it is false. A man cannot defend himself against such a thing, or make a fair fight with a phantom. It is romantic and wrong and false to life."

His words were scornful now, and they stung me. I drew myself up a little haughtily.

"What right have you to speak so to me, I wonder?"

He stopped and turned away.

"I have indeed little right," he said. He spoke with real bitterness now. "And all the less because I believe in my soul it is all so useless. Even if you could this minute throw away all these phantom things and rid your soul

once for all of this romance that veils from your eyes the glory of the reality that has lain under your very hands—even then, I think it would be too late. The doctors give me no hope that Edgar Marshall can get well. In a little while he may be gone, taking all this nobility and beauty with him into some great future, let us hope, where reality and beauty are the true romance."

There are moments that stab us or shock us out of years of lethargy and dreaming. As he spoke these words, I seemed to be suddenly fearfully awake. This friend of Edgar Marshall's, in daring to speak truth, had suddenly made me weak and hateful in my own sight. Here was I, clinging to a phantom of romance in a dreamy intensity of selfish memory, and here was one of the noblest men God ever made thirsty and starved for the reality I had chosen to throw away.

I was roused, angry, frightened, dismayed.

"Why did you not tell me this at once?" I said sharply. "If you think he needs me, let me go to him. If I can help, it is my place to be there."

I could see some scorn still in his eyes, but his love for his friend was uppermost.

"Thank you," he said. "Will you come with me?"

I never shall forget that strange ride to the hospital. There was no romance there—the great, gaunt building, the polished floors, the bareness, the disinfectant odors, the clerk who took our names, the businesslike nurses, and at last the fearfully bare room; and then—then his face upon the pillow, white, white and beautiful—I could not begin to tell you how beautiful!—and his hand white and listless upon the coverlid.

I do not know, I'm sure, where the Lady Ethelberta was then. I fear that fearfully real ride and the bare hospital without a touch of romance about it were too much for her, for her who

had been used to tapestried chambers and the odors of flowers and the glow of shaded lights. At any rate, I never thought of her. I analyzed none of my feelings. I gave myself over for once in my life to realities. I was in the presence now of the only great realities that dominate all others—Life and Love and Death. I slipped down on my knees before them, and I laid my hand against that white hand, and then my cheek. It was all I wanted just then—to hold it for my own and to keep death away from it.

When I looked up at last, the nurse and Mr. Cranby had slipped away, and he and I were there alone, he and I and reality.

## VI.

It was so, by some undeserved mercy, that I was saved from the old, old mistakes, the old follies.

Little by little, as the days went by, I had time to think of these things; I had time to see how I had cheated myself for years with romantic ideals that I had held to be dearer than all those joys that life itself offered me. What joys? The love and beauty and nobility of a noble soul like that of Edgar Marshall; the delight of love, the joy of service; the comfort, the inexpressible comfort, of forgetting myself and all my preconceived ideas of life and taking life just as it came, minute by minute, and living it for him. Even his faults—very gentle ones, to be sure—how much I loved them, because they, too, were so real! And the tasks and duties and humble things that I never heard of Ethelberta having anything to do with—how I loved, loved, loved them!

How I love them still, now that his life and mine belong wholly to each other and I am Edgar Marshall's wife!

I have written this as a confession and an admonition all in one. I wanted



And there are older women, too, who are cheating themselves and their husbands in just the same way, clinging to some romantic dream of life other than it really is.

to get my soul free of the shame of the old faults, and I wanted to unburden it, too, of the new joy that is at times almost too much and, like all true joys, needs to be shared. And besides all this, I wanted my own story to be, perhaps, of some service to other girls and women. There are girls in plenty, I know, who are doing just what I did, who are carrying about romantic ideas that are blinding them to the beauty of realities. There are girls who are tasting life only from the overflavored and

sickening-sweet cup of fiction or the stage or the sensational "movies"; who are longing to be Ethelbertas, Clorindas, and Corinnes; who are dreaming, exactly as I dreamed, of square-jawed, incredibly handsome heroes, who, in romantic surroundings, shall take them fiercely in their arms on short notice and breathe intense and burning hot words of love in their ears, and who shall behave themselves like heroes on a stage, but not, not like real people.

And there are older women, too, as

Mr. Cranby said, who are cheating themselves and their husbands in just the same way, clinging to some romantic dream of life other than it really is.

Under the broadening and deepening influence of the realities—the blessed realities of everyday—my life has widened and deepened I cannot begin to say how much. People come to me for understanding and sympathy now as they did not use to do in the old romantic days. They tell me so many things about themselves, and they often open their hearts for me to see.

This little simple home of Edgar's and mine—so unlike the stately mansion in which Ethelberta lived—is glorified by such splendid and real things. The sunshine coming in at the windows, the stars over it at night, the daily waking to the daily blessed reality of true companionship and love; the real, real touch of his hand on mine; the real daily tasks to fill the hours and to make the place sweet with love's labor while

he is away; the sound of his step returning, and of his key in the latch—there is not a romantic incident in a book, not one, that I would exchange for these! And the sense of his presence, and the blessed privilege of living together, he and I, a life of simple realities—I know nothing in fiction that could seem to me now half as precious.

And the splendors, the humble, lovely splendors of wifehood and all the lovely daily service of it—what is there anywhere so beautiful, so satisfying? And the love and sorrow and joy that come with the bearing and rearing of little children, can you name me anything in all the wide world of romance, and in all the long halls of its fame, one-half so precious or wonderful, I wonder?

I wish I could make every girl and woman in the world see this. If only I could open their eyes, as life opened mine, to the blessed and incredible romance of reality—reality the only *true* romance!



## A SUNSET SONG

COME rest, little dear one. The red sun is sinking;  
 The little, clear pond is as red as the sky;  
 The big evening star shines aloft, never winking;  
 And the froggies peep shrill as the brook murmurs by.  
 You've played all the day till you nod like a posy,  
 Your blue eyes are dimmed by the lashes that sweep,  
 So lean on my shoulder, O dimpled and rosy,  
 And dream while I rock you and sing you to sleep.

Sleep, little tired one! The cow's softly lowing  
 To her own drowsy baby all safe in the stall.  
 The lambs in the sheepfold to slumber are going,  
 And the kitten's rolled up in a wee, furry ball.  
 No, let him lie still; you shall stroke him to-morrow,  
 Shall feed pretty bossy and run with the sheep,  
 But now you must rest. May you ne'er wake to sorrow  
 When I've blessed you and pressed you and sung you to sleep;

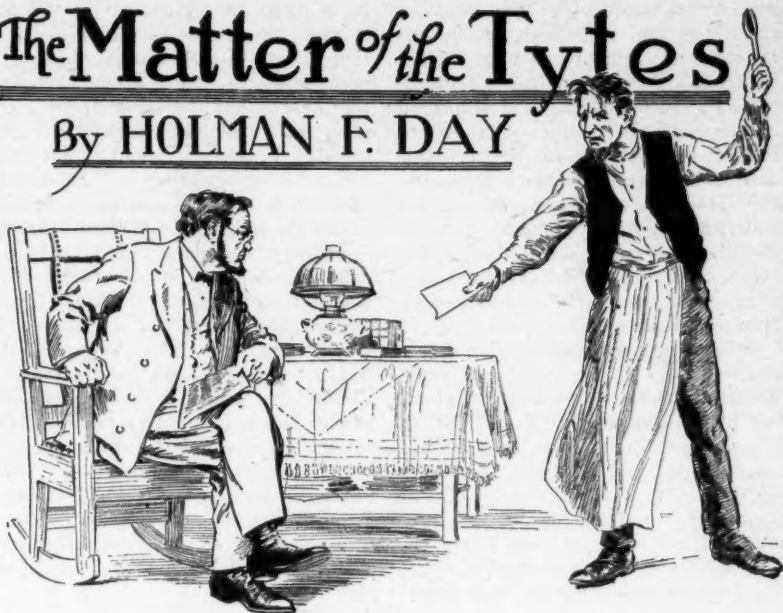
(H'm—h'm—h'm—h'm——)

When I've blessed you and pressed you and sung you to sleep!

JEANNIE PENDLETON HALL.

# The Matter of the Tyles

By HOLMAN F. DAY



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

Cap'n Sproul, old sea captain and man of affairs, is back again. The way he handles these relatives of his wife's will delight his many admirers.

CONTRARY to all his established resolves in regard to Mrs.

Sproul's family connections, Cap'n Aaron Sproul found himself, after considering the thing, altogether too deep in the affairs of the Tyles; and the more he considered, the more acutely he felt sour resentment. Trouble had bubbled whenever he had been mixed up with Mrs. Sproul's relatives, just as surely as a hot fire will bring water to a boil.

His wife had been born a Ward.

There had been Colonel Gideon Ward—trouble too painful to dwell upon!

There had been Marengo Ward Todd—let the spice of it be sealed in oblivion's ginger jar!

Also, there had been Todd Ward Brackett—"Old Balm o' Joy." On a lowery, moist day the cap'n always felt twinges in the toe that he had broken against Mr. Brackett's solid person.

Now, here was Evadene Todd Tyte, wife of Isaac Tyte and cousin of Mrs. Sproul. Cap'n Sproul admitted to himself that he had an especially soft side where his wife was concerned. And Mrs. Sproul presented a soft side to her cousin, for Evadene Tyte was a mighty smart milliner and constructed for the cap'n's wife hats that fairly put out the eyes of every other woman in town. Mrs. Sproul always got first peek and first pick after the openings, and no money could buy a copy for another woman.



Cap'n Sproul, as Scotaze's magnate and plutocrat, had been approached regularly through his wife.

"And now I'm snarled up in that cussed Tyte cable with every kind of a knot around me from a half hitch to a Carrick bend," he informed Mrs. Sproul, when she adventured with a new proposition.

"But it's right in the line of business, Aaron, and you've got the money to spare, and she can afford to pay good interest. She's an awful smart woman to make money."

"Then why don't she make it for herself, and stop coming a-gimleting me every other thing? What does she do with her money?"

"If Isaac had more sprawl, and wasn't so wasteful in his cooking, and didn't keep buying every namable thing that an agent comes around and offers him on the installment plan, she would be more forehanded. But you know what Isaac is!"

"Yes, I *know*, and I would say if there wasn't ladies present."

"But he's a good-meaning man, and seeing that she hasn't any time to do her own housework, he helps her just that much by staying around the house. I do hope you can lend her the five hundred dollars, Aaron."

"I have let her have that store at half the rent I could get from somebody that wasn't a Todd or a Ward; I spent more'n a year's rent money fitting it up for her; I went on her bonds after I got the post office for her; I have settled more'n half a dozen suits those installment fellows have brought against Ike. But this last scrape of his they can fix up for themselves."

"I didn't know you had found out about it, Aaron," she faltered.

"Found out about it! You told me yourself, holding your little porringer before tapping me! He buying a cream separator, and never having a cow, and

never will have any, and wouldn't know how to milk a cow if he did have one!"

"This is since the separator matter," she confided apprehensively. "But it may be a good thing—and I was going to speak to you about it."

"What in blazes has he bought now? He'd contract for a great horned Peruvian doobabbler if he could get it on the installment plan."

"It's an incubator. There's lots of money in the hen business."

"He never had a hen on the premises except the ones that come over and scratch up his garden while he's setting and tooting into that blasted old tram-boon, or whatever they call it, and too lazy to shoo 'em off."

"We won't talk about it," she said nervously. "I'm sorry I mentioned it, for I do want you to help Evadene on this thing."

"Much obliged for your using only one gimlet on me at a time," he replied acridly.

"Her idea of putting in made hats right from the city is awful good, Aaron. Of course, you don't know about millinery, but I want you to take my word for it. Capitola Todd is a good country trimmer, and Evadene is lucky to have her for help, but Capitola isn't up to real snappy styles. It's going to mean a lot to me to have first pick from the made hats. And you'll get your interest, and it's a good investment. Money is coming in so fast from your vessels nowadays! Why, I heard you say that one schooner has paid for herself in two trips to South America."

"If I ever do any more talking about my profits after this, I'll be doing it in my sleep, and don't you believe a word you hear, Louada Murilla."

"She's anxious to start for New York to-morrow, to get in first grab before others pullhaul the stock all over. Please, Aaron! I'll be so grateful! And she needs to go to market right

away. She's let her stock get awful low—planning on the made-hat idea."

"If she's been selling out, she must have cash of her own," insisted the cap'n suspiciously.

"I suppose she has some, of course, but she wants to stock up big and advertise and draw in trade from Vienna and Newry and the other towns. It's a grand idea, Aaron. Please help her—and me!"

"Seeing how many turns of the cable you've got around me, I suppose I may as well let the family slip over another bowline on a bight."

He made out a check.

"Hand it to her and get her note for four months. I can't stand it to talk with her. She's too mushy-mouthed."

"Evadene is a little too romantic, I'll admit," agreed his wife. "It has been a setback to her in a good many ways. Isaac never would have got her if he hadn't been so good looking in his young days, writing poetry and playing on the violin. Now he drives her near distracted with that trombone and his shiftlessness."

Cap'n Sproul grunted and returned to his study of the shipping-news column, where certain charter prices made comfortable reading for a shipowner. With dividend checks tumbling in on him as they were, the matter of five hundred dollars to satisfy a desire of his wife did not long occupy his thoughts.

Two days later, however, while he was comfortably reading more ship news, the Evadene Tyte affair came slamming back at him with a force that knocked him dizzy.

Mr. Isaac Tyte burst into the Sproul sitting room.

His long hair was tousled, indicating great mental disturbance; his little eyes seemed to be sticking out as if a brainful of wild thoughts were pressing behind them; his whiskers also stuck out, as quills and hair of animals reveal

frenzied emotions; he had an open letter in one hand and a wooden spoon covered with batter in the other, and he was bareheaded and wore his kitchen apron—all showing that he was in great haste and in a state of mighty excitement.

"You have helped and condoned, Cap'n Sproul!" he shrieked. "It was having your money to use that took her out of the home circle! I hold you responsible!"

"Responsible for what?" demanded the cap'n, over the edge of his newspaper. "Had a batch of biskit scorch on you?"

"She has left me! She has run away! She has eloped! You read that letter!"

He flung the missive, and the cap'n secured it on the fly. He gave over the comforting ship news and read what was not comforting:

MR. ISAAC TYTE: I address you formally because hereafter we must be strangers to each other. I have gone away forever. You have long ceased to be my ideal. I am afraid you never were, but you charmed my maiden breast with siren strains.

"Wonder what cussed dime novel she copied that out of," muttered the cap'n. He read on:

Do not try to follow me, for I warn you that I have gone to one who is a knight of romance and will protect me against all the world. I ask you to hurry and get your divorce, so that I may be all his. It is now just romance, pure romance, between him and me. I have not seen him, but I am sure of his romantic nature. So farewell, a long farewell. Live happy.

EVADENE.

P. S.—Tell Captain Sproul that I leave the store and post office to him and as he is my bondsman, he will have to look after the mails and settle for me, and I hope he will get his five hundred dollars back from the store. It seemed best to get that money from him, so that I could hurry to my knight of romance.

"So you helped and you condoned! You gave her money to run away with!" declared Mr. Tyte.



He bonneted Mr. Tyte in a huge waste-paper basket and ruthlessly kicked him up and down the store.

"You're a devilish liar! Take that remark and float up the dock on it!"

"But she says right here in the letter that you gave her the money."

"I lent it to her after she had lied to my wife."

"I have been robbed of my beauteous companion—a rare jewel among women. I have been robbed by a thief who looked on her and yearned——"

"Look here, Tyte! She says in this letter that they've never met. And coil cable on that beauty-and-jewel talk! Now that she has run away and left you, permitting me to speak frank, I want to say that your wife is so homely that she would scare away a school of sculpins, and you know it."

"Well, I'll admit that she wasn't what you'd call a raving beauty," said Mr. Tyte, suddenly moderating his tone of anguish.

"If she wants to go, let her go. What's the use of trying to hold onto a woman if she wants to run away? I don't believe she has gone with any critter such as she calls a 'knight of romance.' —That's poppycock! If he sees her first, she'll have to keep on running to catch him. I tell you, Tyte, she is an awful plain woman—all-fired homely! Men ain't picking that kind in these days when there are plenty of women to go around."

"Maybe not," agreed the bereaved husband meekly. "I don't say as I

should pick her, myself, give me another chance. But that ain't gainsaying the fact that she is gone, and that I have lost her. And it has put me into a bad hole."

"Yes, you will have some real work to do instead of loaf, pot-wallop, and toot that dummed old tramboon. Work will be good for you."

"I don't relish that kind of talk," stated Mr. Tyte, bridling. "I don't propose to have it rubbed into me, Cap'n Sproul. I reckon I can sue you and get damages. I may do it unless I am handled just right."

"You dambuzzled kitchen kalumper!" roared the cap'n. "How do you dare to talk to me like that? I haven't anything to do with your wife running away!"

"If you hadn't lent her money, she wouldn't have gone. You got that post office for her, taking her mind off her home circle. You fixed up that store for her, and she begun to put on airs and——"

"Confound you, you loafer, is that all the gratitude you have for the help I have given the Tyte family? I have given you your chance to loaf while she has been earning the money."

"I ain't ever admitted that I have relished your sticking your nose into my family matters—and if I get a good lawyer, there's no telling what can be done against you as a condoner and helper."

Cap'n Sproul arose in his wrath and yanked the apron off Mr. Tyte.

"If I catch you pot-walloping, fiddling, loafing, or tooting that tramboon of yours——"

"It's a trombone!"

"That tramboon again until this business is straightened out in that post office and store, I'll warjillick ye!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Just the minute you stop hipering as I tell you to hiper, you'll find out. Where's your hat and coat?"

"At home. I ain't thinking about hats and coats."

The cap'n threw the apron into a corner.

"We'll get 'em as we go along."

"Along where?"

"To the store, dumblast ye! I've got a job for you, Tyte."

"I ain't going to parade my grief in public in a store. I can't face people. I prefer to mourn at home."

Cap'n Sproul set iron clutch around Tyte's arm and propelled him forth into the street.

"I'm doing all the preferring at the present time, Mr. Tyte. And you try to sag back on me and you'll do the mourning. I have found out how to kick a Todd or Ward without busting a toe."

"I ain't a Todd or Ward."

Cap'n Sproul kept his captive moving briskly.

"You married one of them. That gives you your rating."

"What have I go to do?" bleated Mr. Tyte.

"Do what I tell you to do!" shouted the cap'n. "You keep your ear open, and you'll hear orders from the quarter-deck as orders are needed. Hustle your boots, now."

Ten minutes later he trotted into the store, pushing along his shanghaied assistant. The post office was on one side of the big room, and the millinery store on the other. Miss Capitola Todd, a languid and languishing blonde, met them with a simper and promptly became querulous.

"You promised to come in and help me with the mails, Isaac, and you haven't been near. It's too much work for one."

"He's here now," stated the cap'n, with decision. "And so am I here. And I'm boss. Something has happened."

"What?"

"If he wants to tell you, he can do it. I'm too busy. Hand me all the books

and don't let anybody come into that back room to disturb me. Tyte, you take your position in that post office and look pleasant and tend to business."

He pushed the husband into the inclosure, pawed around, and found a book of instructions.

"When you ain't lapping stamps and handing out the mail to inquiring friends, you study that book and find out how to run a post office in a first-class, shipshape, and seamanlike style. It's all charted there. And you let me catch you making a mistake and I'll do to you what I said I'd do!"

He picked up the store accounts, which Miss Todd had produced. Before he slammed the door of the back shop behind him, he heard Mr. Tyte beginning the tale of his woe.

"Land o' Goshen and the saints of Israel!" broke in Miss Todd, on his first words. "She has been getting a letter in a purple envelope 'most every day!"

"Still, I don't believe in that knight of romance," mused the cap'n, beginning on the books. "It don't stand to reason, remembering her looks. She wouldn't have a chance, not even with a blind man."

The store accounts were not especially illuminating nor were they encouraging, for Mrs. Tyte had evidently been diligent in collecting sums due her, preparing for sudden departure. Cap'n Sproul came forth from his investigations in no amiable frame of mind. He found Mr. Tyte sitting on the counter of the millinery department, and Miss Todd was fondling his hand.

"I'm trying my best to comfort him in his great affliction," she said, with emotion.

"I told you to be studying that book of instructions," said Cap'n Sproul, curt and surly. "That will take your mind off'n your troubles and you'll be doing something sensible."

"I have read it all through once—

and it's sensible to be comforted by a friend," declared Mr. Tyte.

"You go back into that pen and read it over again. And when you get hankering for comfort, you call on me. I don't propose to have any lallygagging going on here on the premises. Miss Todd, you begin marking down the prices on this stock. That will keep you busy."

"You're not going to close out the store, are you?"

"Do I look like a man who would go into the millinery business, marm?"

"I would gladly stay here and work for you, captain. We need a millinery store in the town."

"Then let somebody start one. They won't get any opposition from me. I'm looking for five hundred dollars and three months' rent money, and when I get that out of here, the widdér and the orphan is welcome to what's left."

"We have decided to keep her going away a close secret," said Mr. Tyte through the post-office wicket.

"Suit yourself. It's none of my funeral. Only I shall report to the post-office folks that she has resigned. As to why she has resigned, you won't find me putting out any bulletin boards, Tyte."

"May I see you in private, Captain Sproul?" asked Miss Todd in a purring voice.

"I guess this is private enough," said the captain, when he had followed to the rear end of the store. "What can I do for you?"

She came around the end of the counter and stood close to him, lowering her eyes and then lifting them to his. Then she picked a thread off his coat. Her proximity and her leering gaze irritated him.

"Speak up, marm," he suggested. "I'm in more or less of a rush."

"I can't speak up. I don't want anybody to hear," she whispered.

"I'm not a mind reader."



"You are so short with folks I'm 'most afraid of you, Captain Sproul. But you are such a masterful man that I admire you very much. Women admire masterful men. Women can't help it."

"Marm, I must ask you to talk business."

"Very well, since you insist on hurrying me into it. But I was hoping for a little more time to arrange my thoughts, so that I could interest you. I

do know how to handle folks. And I am so sympathetic!"

In his thoughts the cap'n called her a languishing Lydia and reflected that she resembled a kitten leaning up against a warm brick.

"And she ain't got any more brains than a cat," he told himself.

"If I could have, say, five hundred dollars, so I could run up to New York and buy a line of made hats, we could almost double our money—you and I."



Arm in arm the two walked out of the store.

think it is too bad to give up this store. Won't you back me in it?"

He stared at her, trying to tone down into fit language the retort he wanted to make relative to the Todd family. She patted his arm.

"No one really need know that we are partners—silent partners. Evadene Tyte actually kept customers away. She was so unattractive!" She cocked her head on one side and gave him a long and coquettish stare. "I think I

"Look here! Don't you know that's the same story Tyte's wife worked on me? You don't think I'm starting a general parade out of this town, each with five hundred dollars, do you?"

"I didn't know she borrowed money of you, Captain Sproul."

"She did. With that story. You'll have to think of a better one."

"I shall not resent what you say, captain. But I do hope that you'll grow to know me better and find out what a

loyal little friend I can be to anybody who is good to me. I can take your money——"

"No, you can't," blurted Cap'n Sproul. "Excuse me, marm, if I seem to be a little mite snappish to-day, but I have stated what I'm going to do with what's in this store. I'm going to close out stock. I'll give you what you can make over my five hundred and the rent money."

"But that isn't the best thing to do," she pouted. "The best thing is for you and me to be partners—and we'll make it a nice little secret, if you feel that way about it."

"I haven't any kind o' feelings about the millinery business," stated the cap'n with firmness. "I've been numb ever since he showed me that letter. You go to marking down prices."

He turned and trudged out of the store.

He did confide to his wife the situation in the Tyte family, after supper that evening; he did not consider that he was breaking his promise to Tyte, for Cap'n Sproul could trust his wife's discretion.

"Others will have to keep guessing—and I can't help that," he said. "But you are in the family, and you might as well know, so that you won't be bothering me with foolish questions from now on."

"But if it hadn't been for me, you wouldn't have been cheated out of your five hundred dollars," she quavered. "Honestly, Aaron, I'm ashamed of my family—the way they have always treated you in money matters."

"I shan't be cheated out of five hundred—not if that weeping willer of a Miss Todd has gumption enough to sell off those goods. And if I do lose a little—and can get shet of the Todds and Wards and others at the same time—I shan't begretch the money it costs."

"Capitola is a good trimmer," ventured Mrs. Sproul.

"Can she trim anybody any better than your Evadene?"

"I mean hats, Aaron. If she had a little money, she could——"

"Louada Murilla!" barked Cap'n Sproul. He gazed at her, knitting his brows. "You know what I want to say about handing any more money to that tribe! You certainly must know what I want to say! But I don't dare to start in. But you know better than ever to do any more Todding and Warding with me."

"It slipped out."

"There's danger in being slippery."

"Do you think Evadene has gone with a handsomer man?"

"Not far," was the cap'n's sententious rejoinder.

Then he studied ship news for a time and went to bed.

In the dim dawn of the morning, he was wakened by his telephone bell. It rang his call over and over insistently. He rose and stumbled to the aggravating clarion of the morning, and bawled an angry "Hello!" into it.

"It's Mr. Tyte. You've got to come and come in a hurry!"

"What's the trouble?"

"I haven't got time to explain. You've got to get here in ten minutes."

"Where are you, you infernal rooster?"

"In the post office, where I ought to be. I'm getting the early mail ready to send out, and there'll be trouble all round if you ain't here before the bags go."

He hung up.

Cap'n Sproul had a seaman's celerity in dressing when the call of duty sounded, and he yanked on his clothes at his best rate of speed. There had been urgency in Mr. Tyte's tone. Robbers—defalcation—what could it be? Whatever it was, that post office was on his shoulders until he could release himself from the bonds. He galloped down the street with only part of his buttons

fastened, and was glad that nobody was abroad to behold his disarray. He tore into the post office and rushed to Mr. Tyte in the pen. The officiating postmaster was just completing a yawn.

"She was always complaining about having to get up so early to close this mail," he said, starting another yawn. "I can understand just how she felt. I have always relished my morning sleep. I don't know but what I'd be tempted to run away, myself, if I thought I'd have to do this right along."

Cap'n Sproul had not interrupted this yawning speech because he was completely out of breath after his run.

"You got here in good season," said Mr. Tyte patronizingly. "There is considerable time to spare."

"Time to spare for what? What have you routed me out for? What's the matter here?"

"Rules! Obeying rules," stated Tyte, tapping his finger on the book that the cap'n had previously recommended. "You told me to study rules—know the book, eh?"

"Yes, but——"

"You threatened me, and I'm showing you that I can obey orders. Orders are that money returns must be made to the district office on this day and date, and that a witness must be present to see the money put into the envelope before it is sealed with the wax. Now keep your eyes open. Here is the money! In she goes! Light the match and melt the wax! So! Now——"

"Johiferus Jezebel!" yelled Cap'n Sproul. "Do you dare stand there and tell me that you have rolled me out of my watch below to come down here and watch you put money into an envelope?"

"Rules provide it must be done. Rules say there must be a witness. You are her bondsman and are naturally most interested to see that everything is done clear quill. So I called you.

You are not blaming me for obeying rules, are you?"

"You devilish doodiap with cotton-batting brains, you could have waited till the noon mail! I'm a good mind to—to——"

"When you've got a thing to do, as the rules provide, in these government matters, the best way is to do it on the dot. I'd rather have you blame me for doing my duty than be houted by you for not doing it," stated Mr. Tyte.

He dragged out the bag and tossed it into a beach wagon, in which a sleepy boy had driven up.

"And furthermore," proceeded Mr. Tyte, coming back dusting his hands, "I have been thinking over this whole matter, and I don't see where you have any right to jam me into this post office as you have done. I ain't postmaster. I have only jobbed here once in a while to help her out."

"You are saving her being chased up by the government as an absconder. You're saving your family from disgrace."

"I've made up my mind that I don't care what happens to her. Let 'em chase her and arrest her. That will show that knight of romance what kind of a woman she is. And if she's arrested and put into jail, that will be just so much more good evidence in my divorce case. You take this post office and stick it in your ear! I ain't a mite afraid of you. I ain't one of your nigger sailors you used to mollywhop!"

Cap'n Sproul had no excuse for what he did.

He had been trying to restrain his rage as best he could; he had been getting some mastery over it, in spite of that monstrous routing out at peep of dawn. But this cool defiance on top of all the rest was too much for his boiling feelings.

He bonneted Mr. Tyte in a huge waste-paper basket and ruthlessly kicked him up and down the store. He



"But the store is not closed. You are behind that counter and you own up that you are running the place." "There's something underhanded here," stated one of the group.

was obliged to pull the basket off his victim, for Tyte's arms were pinned to his sides.

"That's only a little taste of what I can do to you, you long-maned fluffyingdingdo!" he panted. "You tend out on this post office or you'll get the rest of it! You needn't worry about its being a long job. I'm just as anxious to get shet of you as you are of me. But you're going to help me out by doing your wife's job here, seeing that she still is your wife."

"We'll see what the law has to say about assault and battery!"

"Prove it! You didn't even see whether I was the one that was kicking you. This matter is between you and

me, and it better stay so. You'd better see your wife's end of this thing through and save trouble."

"Hold on before you go, Cap'n Sproul! I've got something else on my mind. By your keeping me here in this place all yesterday, my incubator fire went out on me and fifty dozen eggs have been spoiled. Now who is going to pay for that?"

"You haven't got any business trying to run an incubator. You might be able to set on a dozen eggs and hatch 'em that way, while you was practicing on that tramboon, but you can't run an incubator."

"It was your fault that I didn't get back to take care of the fire. I'm poor

and trying to make a living. You're rich and you go stamping over everybody. That's the way——"

But the cap'n put a stop to this whining.

"Go get fifty dozen more eggs and bring the bill to me, and I'll pay it, Tyte. And forget that I kicked you. I don't mean to abuse anybody. But you maddened me like the devil, rousing me up like you did this morning. Now let's try to get along better. I'll use you right on pay if you'll mind this office till I get things straightened on your wife's accounts."

"I ain't going to consider her! She ain't entitled to any consideration. You can put it on the plane of what I'm going to get out of it—or you can put it on the plane of friendship between us two right here."

"We'll keep it on the plane of what you're going to get out of it," the cap'n hastened to say.

"All right! I note the slur! So be it! I shall conduct myself accordingly."

"You ain't meaning that as a threat, are you?" demanded Cap'n Sproul, turning at the door and staring over his shoulder.

"I'll leave it stand as I've said it," declared Mr. Tyte with rancor.

The cap'n offered no retort. He went back home.

"If he feels toward you the way you say he feels," said Louada Murilla at breakfast, "the sooner you march his boots out of the store and post office, the better."

"He has bragged that he's going to get the best of me," said the intractable cap'n; "or it was words to that effect. And when any man brags that way to me, I'm always willing to give him a good running start."

"But it may only lead to more trouble for you, Aaron."

"Little wind puffs are always welcomed in the doldrums! It has been

getting rather slow around here of late."

"It's the only failing you've got," she lamented. "It always seems as if you like to be in a fuss with somebody."

"Plum duff would be a blasted poor dish if it didn't have a few spicy raisins in it."

She sighed, and the captain went off down street without devoting any time to the peaceful occupation of reading ship news.

It was still early, and there were no patrons for either store or post office. But the cap'n's heads of departments did not seem to be bothering their minds about lack of patronage. Miss Todd was in the post-office pen with Mr. Tyte. His head was on her shoulder, and he was sniffing and detailing his grief and loneliness as a deserted husband.

"Here, you! I won't have any such actions around this establishment!" yapped the boss.

Miss Todd did not remove her arm from Mr. Tyte's neck, and she met the cap'n's scowl with a stare of rebellious resolve.

"Cast off, I tell ye!"

"If you mean by that that I can't comfort a poor, distressed fellow creature who needs a woman's consolation, you are more hard-hearted than I thought you were—and land knows I have found you hard-hearted enough!"

Mr. Tyte stopped sobbing and gazed on the cap'n without lifting his head from the shoulder of his comforter; his whisker tufts were rampant, his eyes gleamed, his lips were rolled away from his teeth.

"I'm running this craft, and she ain't going to be run skioogle style," declared the cap'n.

"Who gave you any license to run it?" squealed Mr. Tyte. "I have been thinking it all over—and who gave you any license to run it, say I? This is my wife's store—this is her post office. Be-



cause you are an old hornbeam without music in your soul ain't any sign that others haven't got feelings."

"You can't frighten me one mite, Cap'n Sproul," insisted Miss Todd.

"Who gave you license?" repeated the lachrymose husband.

"I'll quell mutiny, and we'll see about the license later," stated the cap'n grimly. "Marm, you can either come out of there, obeying orders and under your own sail, or I'll walk in there, make fast, and tow you out by the ear. Take your pick!"

Miss Todd spat angry ejaculation at him and then released Mr. Tyte and came forth.

"I don't have to stay in any place where I am slurred and misjudged. The store is gone to rack and ruin, anyway."

She went behind the counter, put on her hat, and started for the door.

"I'm a free American citizen," declared Tyte, "and when I don't want to stay in any place, I ain't going to stay there—no matter what my rights in that place may be. I'll tend to those rights later. I'll come back here when the conditions are such that a sensitive man can endure them. Just one moment, Miss Todd! Will you take my arm?"

He marched past the cap'n, who did not offer opposition.

Arm in arm the two walked out of the store.

"Well," mused the cap'n, his gaze roving around the deserted establishment, "looks as if I'd got to run these two things, instead of run Tyte and that mushy old maid. There's this comfort—they bunnits won't be coming over to hug and kiss the letters. My feelings will be relieved to that extent!"

He settled himself to do the best he could under the circumstances. He handled the morning mail when it came in, and curtly explained to inquiring friends that he was merely substituting in the post office in order to pass away

the time. It was known in the community that the cap'n was bondsman of Evadene Tyte and that his influence had secured the office for her; therefore no especial comment was roused by his presence at the wicket.

What did stir various kinds of speculation was the absence of Miss Todd from the millinery department. The cap'n was never inclined to canvass his own affairs in public, and he stated to first inquirers that Miss Todd had been seized by sudden and serious illness, and was out of the store for a time. But Miss Todd, evidently in order to embarrass him, came from her home and walked up and down on the opposite side of the street. His impulse was to go out and throw rocks at her.

Later he restrained that impulse by a mighty effort at self-control, and went out and beckoned to her and twisted his face into a grin of apparent amity. Three women were at the millinery counter and were making considerable trouble for him. He needed Miss Todd—most urgently did he need her. But Miss Todd made a face at him and continued her patrol.

"It's this way, Captain Sproul," insisted one of the women, when he came back into the store. "I don't want to be nippy or complaining, but you say you are running this store."

"Yes'm, and you can take your pick of any one of them hats, and set your own price."

"I don't want any of those hats. I want my own hat trimmed with the goods I brought in here and left."

"I haven't ever took up hat trimming," stated the cap'n sourly.

"I didn't expect you had, sir. But if the work isn't going to be done as promised, I want my trimmings handed to me here and now."

"I don't want to stir any trouble for anybody who ain't to blame," said another of the women, "but if I don't get

back my impeyan, I shall come in here with a lawyer."

"Get back your what?" demanded Cap'n Sproul. He went behind the counter and began to open drawers and slam them shut.

"Impeyan. It's feathers."

"Mine was a parrot's breast and two beaded shields."

"I left a plume and two aigrets."

"Plenty of the last in stock," stated the cap'n with deep conviction. "Yes, marms, plenty of regrets! And one of them is that this store is closed for business to-day. It will be open for all comers to-morrow."

"But the store is not closed. You are behind that counter and you own up that you are running the place."

"That's just the idea. I am running it, and what I say goes." This store is closed, even if it doesn't look closed."

An idea had come to him. He had firm faith in the judgment of his wife. He decided that he would bring her down to the place that evening, and behind drawn curtains she could go over the stuff and assort it so that it could be returned intelligently. He did not propose to expose Louada Murilla to the nagging of angry women.

"There's something underhanded here," stated one of the group.

That remark clinched his resolution to keep his wife out of the mess.

"Marms, everybody has the right to close for one day to take account of stock and rearrange goods. But I don't propose to get into deep water by passing out impium feathers in mistake for gogo birds. Store is closed, I say."

And for the rest of the day, that laconic statement, backed by his grimmest manner, held off the feminine public.

In the evening, after a few hours' work, his wife was able to get some order out of chaos, and prevailed upon him to allow her to be his helper on the morrow.

But that morrow brought to him a fairly paralyzing surprise. When he entered the store at an early hour to get the mail ready, the millinery department was cleaned out; it was as bare as a bird's nest after a winter gale.

Cap'n Sproul hurled the locked mail bag at the sleepy boy and then fairly cantered to the Tyte cottage. He returned the compliment of the day before by routing out Mr. Tyte, beating a club against the side of the house with the same tremendous clatter he used to make when he called all hands by pounding a belaying pin on the fore-castle hatch.

"On deck!" he roared. "On deck! I'll come through a window, sash and all, if you ain't on deck in sixty seconds."

"So you have gone and done it, hey?" he rasped, when Mr. Tyte appeared "on deck." "You have done it, hey, you infernal moth-eaten imitation of a feather duster! I'll take you by them whiskers and jounce the daylights out of you unless you own up!"

"I have done what? What have I done?"

"Cleaned out that store! You said you was going to put it on the plane of what you could get out of it. Well, you have got it! Got it all! But you hand it back! Tyte, you are right now in the most critical state of health you was ever in! Do you understand? They'll be picking bearers and ordering flowers for you if you don't show me where them goods are hid."

"I haven't touched the goods!"

"You bragged that you was going to beat me. You did, I say!"

"No matter what I said, Cap'n Sproul, I haven't done anything. I'd never dare to do anything to you. You ought to know that. Everybody is afraid of you."

Cap'n Sproul quieted. There was the ring of truth in what the man said. But

more especially was there conviction in his demeanor.

"You swear to that?"

"I do, sir."

"Then you'd better turn to and lend a hand mighty sudden. I'm in a devil of a pickle, Tyte. Every old hen in this village will be around to-day to get back her feathers. I have promised 'em. I've got to hand 'em over. You know what a woman is where her pet millinery is concerned! Come along! Come to that store! See what has been done."

Mr. Tyte put on a few more garments, and they hurried to the emporium.

"Well, I swow!" averred Mr. Tyte, after inspection. "They have made a clean job of it!"

"There ain't a window broken, not a catch disturbed, not a lock bothered with, Tyte. Did you have a key beside that one I took away from you yesterday?"

"No, sir. And you didn't have to take that key away from me, if you'll remember. I threw it on the floor in front of you."

"Do you think Miss Todd has a key?"

"She never had one. Evadene never let her have a key."

The cap'n pondered.

"But Evadene has got a key," suggested Mr. Tyte.

The two men exchanged looks.

"I have had folks walk over me in this life," confessed Cap'n Sproul, "and I have let 'em keep going if they have traveled fast enough and have acted as if they didn't intend to come back. But when they have come and tried to walk over me again, at the same time wiping their feet on me, I have usually wiggled a little. Tyte, that woman of yours wasn't satisfied with letting well enough alone."

"But there are those in the world who are true and loving and full of sym-

pathy," declared Mr. Tyte, rolling his eyes.

"Look-a-here, you old rat, if my mind wasn't so much taken up with sensible matters right now, I would talk to you in the way you ought to be talked to! I'll postpone it till I have more time. In the meanwhile, the more careful you are about your goings-on, the less of a razoo you'll get from me. You said a little while ago that folks are afraid of me. Just remember that for yourself."

"But I ain't to blame for wanting sympathy."

"I'll give you plenty when I get time—and it will be of the right brand. Now get down to business! I heard that languishing Lydia say that your wife had been getting purple letters. Don't you have any suspicion where they came from?"

"Never saw one. Never knew she was getting any."

"Then she must have kept hiding 'em. Lallygagging women usually hide mush letters, so as to read 'em over. Might have hid some in them drawers behind the counter. Love letters are queer—usually one escapes."

He went behind the counter and pulled out the empty drawers and peered behind them.

"Huh!" he growled all at once. A letter dropped to the floor from behind a drawer. "One that got away—it always happens."

The letter was inclosed in a purple envelope, and Cap'n Sproul put on his spectacles and perused the missive with much interest, the anxious husband staring with all his focused attention. The cap'n put the letter in his pocket and buttoned his coat.

"I've got a right to know what's in there," said Mr. Tyte.

"You'll know when I get ready to tell you. Just now I'm on the trail, and I ain't advertising my clews. Tyte, a word with you and only a word, for I'm



"The more you wiggle, the worse it will hurt ye," he informed his howling captive.

in a hurry. You tend this post office till I come back—and no more foolishness about it. You tell inquiring women that the millinery department will stand behind all promises made by me. Be polite and agreeable to all comers, just as I would be if I was on the job. And now good morning and mind your eye!"

A half hour later Cap'n Aaron Sproul was tearing across country behind a horse which soon realized that haste was required.

"Signed, 'E. Knapp of Newry,'" the cap'n muttered many times. "And according to the letter he had never seen her. Wonder what happened when he did! I reckon, after that first meeting, she decided to go back into the millinery business again. We'll see what E. Knapp of Newry has to say."

Cap'n Sproul knew the ways leading to Newry and he had a tongue.

Before noon he hitched his horse in front of a weather-beaten old farmhouse on the top of a Newry hill.

All his pounding on the cracked old doors raised no one, and he saw nobody inside when he peered in through the dusty glass of the windows. Then he caught sight of a man near the barn and hurried there; the man was inside when he arrived.

"If E. Knapp of Newry is inside there, anywhere, I want to see him mighty sudden on important business," he called in master-mariner tones. "He'd better come out, because I saw him go in."

"I've got business of my own, and I ain't seeing anybody," shouted a man within.

"Then I'll step inside."

"I forbid ye to trespass, and it'll be dangerous if you do."

The door was fastened, and the cap'n began to kick at it. E. Knapp of Newry appeared promptly and jumped through the door and slammed it behind him. He was an elderly man with corn-colored whiskers, and he gave the visitor a sudden stare.

"E. Knapp of Newry, here is a letter you wrote, and it gives you away," stated the cap'n, exhibiting the purple emissary of love and immediately buttoning it back in his deep pocket.

"Hand that over!"

"Main hatch is battened. Can't break cargo."

The other grabbed up a pitchfork that was leaning against the barn.

"Hand that over or I'll rowl it out of you!" He advanced, but the cap'n, with sailor agility, leaped forward, yanked the fork out of the man's loose clutch, set palm against E. Knapp's chin, rushed him against the barn, and with utter ruthlessness drove the tine through Knapp's ear and pinned him to the boarding. Then Cap'n Sproul retreated to the end of the fork handle and leaned on it.

"The more you wiggle, the worse it will hurt ye," he informed his howling captive. "And the more you holler, the longer you will have to stay there. I ain't here to talk politics, discuss how much phosphet to use on Early Rose potatoes, or convert ye to the Hard-Shell Baptist doctrine. I'm here to talk business, and if you don't talk along my lines, you might just as well arrange to have your meals brought to you. You'll stay here some little time!"

"I have been took unawares," whimpered Mr. Knapp.

"Where's that woman you have toled away from home?"

"I didn't tole her. She answered my ad in a marriage-bureau paper and, the first thing I was knowing to, she come along. She ain't with me. She's boarding over yender. I don't want her with me. Her looks don't come up to sched-

ule. I ain't to blame. I want to get out of this scrape."

"What did you know about her scheduled looks?"

"She sent me this picture." Knapp twisted himself and pulled a picture from his pocket, whining because of the twinges in his impaled ear. He showed it to the squinting cap'n. It was certainly not the picture of Evadene Tye. "I have been hornswoggled all through. Cuss her seven hundred dollars! I couldn't stand her looks, even if her face was framed in thousand-dollar bills in packs an inch thick. And there wasn't nothing like so much in that store as she made out."

"So you was the man who come and got that stuff last night, eh?"

"She told me it was hers. I told her the seven hundred didn't interest me, and she sent me after the goods. I didn't know but what the goods, added to the seven hundred, might make enough difference to influence me, but it ain't no use. She ain't as represented—not at all as represented. I'd rather live alone and eat my bannock bread."

"E. Knapp, where are those goods?"

"Inside there in a hayrack. I've been taking kind of an inventory, to see if there was value enough to influence me—but I can't make head nor tail out of the stuff."

"Do you realize that you entered a United States post office in the nighttime?"

"She never told me about that post office. She can't tell the truth about anything."

"Didn't even tell you that she was married, probably."

"Not till she got here and wanted me to wait and be a knight of romance till she got her bill of divorce."

"E. Knapp, you're going to start on another night trip after that sun sets, there! You put those goods back into that store before midnight, to-night, or I'll have you in jail for entering a post



office. I'll be there at the back door to let you in. Now what?"

"I'll lick my hosses all the way there, and sing for joy all the way home!"

Cap'n Sproul yanked out the pitchfork.

"Now hold steady, E. Knapp! I'm a kind and friendly man when I am used right. Stick your ear over here to me till I put on this court-plaster. I'm quite a dabster of a doctor. I used to doctor my sailors at sea."

"What's going to become of her?" inquired Mr. Knapp. "I hope she is going to be got out of town before she pesters me any more."

"You leave all that to me, E. Knapp. You tend to the freight end of this proposition and I'll handle the passenger traffic. What house is she boarding at?"

"That one on the top of the next hill."

"Good day, E. Knapp—and here's a couple of seegars to smoke on your way down. May make the evening pass pleasanter. Glad to have met you and to be so friendly on short acquaintance."

Mrs. Evadene Tyte came timorously forth when Cap'n Sproul hailed in stentorian voice the castle in which she had taken refuge while dealing with her knight of romance.

"You get your volucus and you pile in here mighty sudden," he commanded.

And she obeyed, white and distraught.

"What are you going to do with me, Cap'n Sproul?" she ventured to ask, when they were a mile or so on their way.

He did not reply.

"I don't know why I did it. But he had driven me to distraction by his fool notions. But now I have been a fool on my own part. I realize that I belong at home, no matter what that home is."

"That idea shows a little improvement, marm."

"What are you going to do with me?"

"After you fix up with them women about their impiums and doodabs and things—well, I don't know. It depends on how you tend to business. But I can tell you one thing, marm. If you don't come into the wind and sail on the right tack after this, I'll hitch you and Tyte together with a two-foot length of cable and turn you loose to eat grass in my back pasture."

"You won't have any reason to complain of me again, Cap'n Sproul," she sighed. "I have learned my lesson."

"Now you might as well get your mind off'n your troubles," he said, "and talking over your business is the surest way. Furthermore, I don't want to get caught again if I have to tackle the millinery line. Now, what's an impium?"

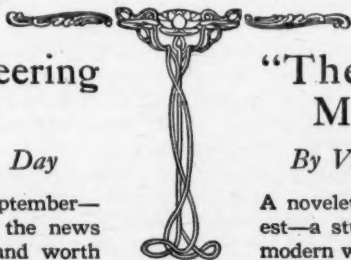
"An imepeyan, cap'n, is a——"

"Clek-cklek!" said Cap'n Sproul to the horse. "Go on, marm! I'm listening close!"

## "Cupid's Steering Oar"

*By Holman F. Day*

in the next—the September—issue of SMITH'S, on the news stands August 5th, and worth waiting for.



## "The Successful Mrs. Ames"

*By Virginia Middleton*

A novelette of absorbing interest—a study of one type of the modern woman—in the next issue of SMITH'S.

# OSTRACIZED

by

## HELEN R. MARTIN



Author of "Tillie, a Mennonite Maid," "Barnabette," "For a Mess of Pottage," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

The story of a girl who was ostracized, but whose ability and force of character turned a tragedy into a triumph.

### CHAPTERS I. TO XXIII.

Liddy Fitzenberger, living with her father and her stepmother in the Pennsylvania-Dutch village of Virginsburg, has grown up in a curious state of isolation. Something in the past of Mr. Fitzenberger and his second wife has resulted in their ostracism by the village, and Liddy, innocent as she is, is included in the ban. A picture, found in a trunk in the attic, of a young woman, with a child at either side and a baby in her lap, is Liddy's only clew to the past. Into this lonely life comes a great joy in the shape of a friendship with the son of a neighboring farmer, Elmer Wagenhorst. Elmer is to enter college in the fall, and for fear of imperiling his chance of an education he does not dare arouse his father's anger by avowing his friendship for Liddy. Her loneliness after Elmer leaves is heightened by her fear that he may advance so far beyond her that he will no longer find her companionable. Spurred on by this dread, she obtains her father's permission to take lessons of the Lutheran clergyman, Mr. Armstrong. Young Mr. Armstrong and his wife, newcomers in the neighborhood, readily accept her as a pupil, and under the influence of their friendship, she develops rapidly. On his return at Christmas, Elmer is swept out of his habitual caution by his passion for Liddy and becomes engaged to her, still insisting upon secrecy, however. Liddy is too much in love with him to refuse the arrangement, though she feels deeply the humiliation of it. Elmer does not go home for the summer vacation or during the following winter. He makes such phenomenal progress in his studies that he is promoted to the senior class. He begins to doubt whether Liddy is the right wife for a rising young man, and this doubt becomes certainty when he meets Nedra Appleton, the daughter of the college president. Nevertheless, he has a pang of jealousy when her brother, Gail Appleton, goes into raptures over a photograph of Liddy. Gail, who is connected with a publishing firm, is at the time very much interested in the unknown author of a book, "A Village Tragedy," that his firm is bringing out, and he declares that Liddy is the exact image of this author as he has imagined her to be. Before he leaves for the summer vacation, Elmer makes a tentative proposal to Nedra, and receives permission to hope. Reaching home, he is much annoyed by the attentions of the new "hired girl," Minnie Doerr, who becomes infatuated with him, though she has previously been encouraging his brother Sam. Elmer arranges to see Liddy at the Armstrongs'.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

TO do one's duty is sometimes very hard. Elmer was honorably refraining to-night from bestowing upon Liddy's most kissable lips the caresses he knew were his for the taking. Her hand, a little red and roughened at the finger tips, as his own were becoming since his return home, tempted him as it hung over the arm of her chair close beside his. But he would not touch it. He had not kissed her in greeting her, though he had clasped both her hands in his in a grip that had pained her, while he had looked greedily upon her freshness, her youth, her

loveliness; lovelier than ever in the brightness and happiness that now radiated from her. It had needed all his resolution, as he had stood over her clasping her hands, not to draw her close and press his lips to hers. She had so evidently expected him to—naturally, since she considered him her plighted lover—and not only had he yearned to do it, but he had hated to wound her by desisting.

But though she had seemed surprised by his reticence, she had not appeared grieved. They had seated themselves comfortably and chatted with the old-time delightful freedom and intimacy;

Elmer pouring himself out to her volubly, and she listening with flattering interest and with the gratifying understanding and sympathy that one could always count upon from Liddy. Elmer thought with an inward sigh what a comfortable mate she would make for the lucky man who did marry her, in case she ever recovered from her disappointment over him.

"Yes, the president's mansion has become a real home to me," he was telling her. "I'm about as intimate there as you are here, Liddy, with these Armstrongs. It's very delightful. They're such a charming family."

"Tell me more about your friend, Gail Appleton. Didn't you say he was in a publishing house?"

"Secretary of one of the largest publishing houses in New York. Commutes daily between Collegetown and New York. He's young to hold such a position, but he's quite equal to it, for he's genuinely literary. Has temperament, you know—I suppose you know what I mean by the artistic temperament—and a highly discriminating taste. What's more, Liddy, I consider my friend, Gail Appleton, the most perfect gentleman I have ever known—I mean inherently, not merely externally. There's a difference, I assure you!"

"Yes, there's a difference."

Elmer, who had been fearing that perhaps he was talking a bit beyond Liddy's depth, looked at her, now, doubtfully. Could it be possible that, drawing a comparison between himself and her friend, Mr. Armstrong, she imagined that she recognized here the difference between veneer and inherent good breeding?

"What sort of a looking person is Mr. Appleton, Elmer? Is he a big, handsome man like you?"

"He's not so heavily built as I am, but he's nearly as tall. He's really rather slender. He has remarkably brilliant gray eyes, and a look of dis-

tingtion that would make him known anywhere for what he is—a man with a background as well as a foreground."

There was a far-away light in Liddy's eyes, as she listened, that mystified Elmer.

"And his disposition and character, Elmer? Tell me more."

"Well, Liddy, you'd only have to look at him—at the sensitive, kind expression of his face—or to see him watch out for his only sister, to whom he's devoted, to know he couldn't hurt a fly; while at the same time there's a force of character there that stands for a lot!"

"What a likable picture you draw of your friend! I'm so glad for you, Elmer, that you've become intimate with such a man—a man of temperament. You're inclined to be a little prosaic, yourself, aren't you?"

"Well, if I am, I'm a good ballast for him. He's inclined to be romantic."

"Don't make him *too* attractive"—she smiled with a lift of her eyebrows—"or I won't answer for the consequences! Oh, Elmer," she sighed with a long, deep breath of satisfaction, "isn't it lovely to be together again? To be able to talk like this face to face?"

"Have you missed me, Liddy?" he asked, keeping his tone very prudently matter of fact.

"I've been too busy to be unhappy over our long separation, Elmer," she truthfully admitted. "But an intimacy like ours is too rare a thing—at least in *my* experience—for me not to value it very, very deeply. And sometimes of late I've felt I was letting you slip from me; I was not being worthy of the great devotion you have given me. I've been careless and thoughtless and selfish about answering your letters. And you've been so patient with me, Elmer—you've never once reproached me! But," she added, with a smile that made Elmer grit his teeth to keep from

jumping up and pressing her to his heart, "I'm going to be good to you now! You'll see!"

"Only so you don't spoil me!" he smiled back.

"Do you know, Elmer, it's a good thing for me that I've known two such men as you and Mr. Armstrong—at the two extremes of the social scale; you with the tough virility, the industry and endurance, inherited from your hard-working peasant ancestry, and he with his delicacy and fineness? It gives me a standard of comparison that one doesn't often get in so circumscribed a life as mine has been. It's going to be of use to me when I get out into the world."

"When you get out into the world?" he asked coldly. He did not like her "standard of comparison". He hated and resented it. Couldn't she see that, whatever he once may have been, he now *was* a gentleman? Her betters certainly accepted him as such! And when she spoke of going "out into the world", was she referring to her marriage with him?

"Yes, Elmer, I do want to get out into the world. I need more education. I want to go to college."

"College!" Elmer looked very much amused. "But, Liddy, you couldn't do that, you know."

"Why not?"

"You haven't the necessary foundation. You couldn't enter a college."

"But I was considering a special course, Elmer, in English and French literature. You know I've been studying French very hard for over a year, now, with Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong."

Elmer shook his head discouragingly.

"Don't be misled. A girl can't earn her way through college as a man can. And indeed it's hard enough for a man. The coeds at Collegeville earn their way as waitresses in the professors' families, and they really have no position at all. I heard one of the ladies at College-

ville laughing over it once and saying, 'It does seem so funny to be waited upon at luncheon by a waitress whom, an hour afterward, you may see on the piazza studying Greek!' They *joke* about the coeds, Liddy!"

"That's a pity; not for the coeds—for those who joke. A catalogue of Collegeville has been sent to me. I've been looking it over."

"But, Liddy!" he protested, leaning forward in his chair in his earnestness; for at all costs he must head off such a disastrous complication as this—Liddy going to Collegeville as a waitress coed! "If you are so set, then, upon it, choose a woman's college. Don't go to a coeducational college. Coeds, I tell you, are looked down upon at Collegeville. One never meets them socially. They are, for the most part, awful frumps! The fellows don't have anything to do with them. They prefer the girls of the town to the coeds. The daughters of the Collegeville professors all go away to college."

"I had thought, Elmer, you'd be so delighted," said Liddy wonderingly, "at the idea of having me with you next year! I could hardly wait to tell you of it. I didn't write you about it because I wanted to see your face when I told you of it."

"Then *this* is your great news? I'm sorry to disappoint you, Liddy, but I couldn't sanction it. Go to Wellesley or Mount Holyoke or Smith, if you really *are* going to college. I really doubt whether you could pass the entrance exams, let alone keep up with the strenuous courses. Take my advice and give it up. You'll be disappointed if you don't. A girl who has to make her own way loses all caste at college."

Liddy looked at him strangely for a minute; then, with an enigmatic smile, she bent her eyes to her lap.

"I've settled *that* proposition!" thought Elmer with satisfaction, noting, as he looked at her downcast eyes, how

dark and thick her lashes were against the fairness of her face.

"Do you read as much as ever, Liddy?" he asked, reverting to less personal topics.

"I read a great deal."

"By the way, have you heard of a novel called 'A Village Tragedy'? The whole world seems to be reading it."

Liddy suddenly flushed crimson and covered her face with her hands.

"Excuse me, Elmer!" she said chokingly. "I feel dizzy! I've been sitting up nights with my father, who is ill."

He sprang to her side.

"Shall I get you water or open a window?"

She dropped her hands to her lap and looked up at him, her face now so white that he was alarmed.

"I'm all right now, Elmer dear. I've lost a lot of sleep lately. I get these dizzy spells sometimes," she added with a little laugh that Elmer thought sounded senselessly gleeful.

"But, Liddy, you must be more careful!" he warned her in genuine anxiety. "You can't afford to lose sleep to that extent! Is your father very ill?"

"Yes, Elmer."

"Dangerously?"

"It looks to me like the beginning of the end," she answered, "though the doctor won't say so."

"But what would you do, Liddy, in the event of his death?" Elmer asked curiously. "You couldn't go on living with your stepmother?"

"Of course not. Whatever you advised, I suppose, Elmer. I've not thought beyond a year or two at college."

"Ah—you expected to use part of your inheritance from your father to go to college, did you?"

"No—I hadn't counted on that."

Elmer smiled.

"You expected to earn your way as easily as I have done?"

"Well, hardly so easily. But I expected to earn my way."

"No go," he said, shaking his head. "Abandon any such notion. Do you know, Liddy, anything about your father's will?"

"No."

"You ought to. He must be pretty well off. His tannery sold for forty thousand dollars. You don't mind my speaking so bluntly? You never professed to have any feeling for your father, you know."

"I don't mind."

"That's sensible of you."

"You say my father had a tannery? I never knew what his business was. He and Joye would not tell me even that!"

"I should think they *wouldn't*!" Elmer vehemently exclaimed—then stopped short.

"Why not, Elmer?"

"Oh—nothing. Look here, Liddy," he said hurriedly, "is there a possibility that your stepmother may have got your father to make an unjust will?"

"I haven't the least idea."

"Can't you find out?"

"It's hard to make my father talk about anything."

"If he's fair to you, Liddy, you ought to inherit a jolly little sum. If the will *shouldn't* be all right—well, I'm a law student, now, you know. I'll take care of that for you. I'll see that your father's widow doesn't get a cent more than her thirds."

Liddy smiled upon him gratefully.

"It's nice to have a protector to attend to all such disagreeable things for me!"

Elmer bit his lip; this tacit understanding of a betrothal, this assumption that he was her "protector," was very embarrassing. He wondered whether it might not be kinder to her, after all, to break it off ruthlessly and just agree to be friends than to let her go on thinking he meant to marry her.



"Elmer," she said, breaking the little silence that had fallen, "did you say you had read 'A Village Tragedy'?"

"Not yet. I'm the only person of my acquaintance, though, that *hasn't* read it. Of course I mean to. It was published by the house Gail Appleton is in,



and he was most enthusiastic about it. Insisted he was dead in love with the heroine or the author or both! He's very susceptible, poor fellow, to a certain kind of appeal. Why, Liddy, he even imagined himself in love with your photograph!"

"I know! I mean—*did* you show him that photograph, Elmer?" she faltered, her face crimson.

"Yes, and I declare to you he held it on his knee, one night, for a solid hour—raving!"

Liddy, gazing at Elmer with a wonderful light in her eyes, did not speak.

"That's a very artistic photograph of you, Liddy."

"And, Elmer," she said breathlessly, "did you tell him my name? And that we were engaged?"

"I don't talk of Virginsburg when I'm away from it," he said hastily. "There's such a wide gap between my life there and here; the two scarcely touch."

"Then you didn't tell him?"

"Tell him what? I say I never speak of Virginsburg when I'm away from it."

"But how, then, did you happen to show him my photograph?"

"I declare if I remember. I know he bullied me into it somehow. Do you happen to have a copy of 'A Village Tragedy'? I want to read it. It's talked about so much, one feels rather foolish not to have read it."

Again, to his alarm, the color suddenly left her face.

"Is it talked about so much?" she asked, her voice faint, but a feverish brightness in her eyes.

"You're going to have another spell!" he cried.

To his bewilderment, she laughed, a happy, gleeful little laugh that seemed to express a depth of satisfaction.

"I'm all right," she assured him. "It's it talked about so much?"

"'A Village Tragedy'? Oh, my yes!" he replied, regarding her with a doubtful, troubled gaze. "Everywhere. They say it might almost have been written by an unlettered person, it's such an extremely simple record of a young girl's life, and that that is its charm—the simplicity of a naïve, absolute truthfulness. The writer, they say, just dipped her pen into her heart and wrote. I'll get it at the Allentown library if you haven't it. Let's see—what's the author's name? Do you remember?"

"Ah—it's hard to remember the names of all the new writers these days; there are so many of them," said Liddy.

"And she writes over a pseudonym,

I think Appleton said. Refused to reveal her identity until she had made sure her book was a success. Well, as it is such a success, he probably knows all about her by this time."

"Hasn't he told you whether he has met her? Don't you correspond with him?"

"No, he's too busy—and so am I. I never even gave him my address. It would be a joke if he's discovered the author's man or an old maid!"

"Yes, wouldn't it?"

"Serve him right, too—getting moony over the heroine of a book or a writer he never saw!"

"A review I read," remarked Liddy, "said that

the book 'breathes the very spirit of youth.' So I suppose the author can't be so very old. Of course she may, as you suggest, be a young man."

She suddenly rose and picked up her white jacket from the back of a chair.

"No, no," protested Elmer, getting up and taking the jacket from her. "It's only ten o'clock. I can't let you go yet! Sit down. I've such lots of things to talk about. We haven't got started yet!"

"I have to go home to my father, Elmer."

"But, Liddy, you've only just come!"

"I'm sorry, but I can't stay longer."



"I seen you through the blinds! Yes, I seen how yous two stood there holdin' hands together!"

home?" he said.

"But of course I understand, Elmer. I wouldn't let you do it."

"Good night," he said, still holding her hand; he couldn't let her go until she had planned their next coming together. Why was she so slow about it?

"Good night," she repeated, trying to withdraw her hand.

He had to let it go then. Very slowly and reluctantly he followed her out into the hall.

"Don't sit up and lose too much sleep," he warned her. "Your friends can't let you harm yourself. You're far too valuable to them, Liddy!"

It was hard to be prudent and resist the temptation to urge her, though it was certainly not for her father's sake that he refrained. He repressed also his injudicious impulse to ask her to name another time and place of meeting.

He held her jacket and, when she had slipped her arms into it, he turned her about and hooked it at the neck, her tempting nearness making the blood mount to his forehead and beat in his temples.

"Thank you, Elmer," she said, releasing herself. "Good night."

She held out her hand and he held it in his.

"Isn't it absurd that I can't see you

"I'm rather valuable to myself just now!" she laughed. "And life is so full and sweet, and youth and power so precious— Oh, I shall take care of myself, Elmer dear—for you *and* for myself!"

She had opened the front door before he could do it for her and was out on the steps.

"But, Liddy!"

"What, Elmer?"

"Odd, isn't it, I've been home two weeks and this has been our first talk?"

"We can have plenty more of them now—only of course I *am* very busy."

"Plenty more of them?" He was determined that she, not he, should appoint their next meeting.

"Oh, yes, plenty more before September. Good night."

"But, Liddy! Well, then, where?"

"Where?"

"Liddy," he said irritably, "this is such an awful summer to me! My friendship with you is the only bright spot in it!"

"It does mean a lot to us, doesn't it, Elmer?" she said wistfully.

"Well, is it going to be another two weeks before we meet again?"

"You can come to see me here almost any time, Elmer."

"I wonder whether it's as safe here as in our old rendezvous in the woods?"

"I think I've outgrown secret meetings in the woods," she smiled.

"Outgrown them? Well, perhaps they were a bit romantic and melodramatic. Shall I, then, just take my chance of finding you here any time I call?"

"Yes. I'm here every day."

"Good night, then, Liddy."

"Good night, Elmer."

He stood back in the darkness of the hall and watched her white figure move down the steps and across the street, thinking how odd it was that, considering herself betrothed to him, she didn't

seem to notice his not having kissed her once.

Not until she was out of sight did he turn back to get his hat and start for home.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

He had gone but a short distance when behind him, on the quiet, deserted village street, he heard a step and, turning, found at his side Minnie Doerr.

"Uh—huh! That's a time I seen you when you done it—ain't?" she laughed loudly, hooking her arm through his and walking at his side.

Coming as he did straight from Liddy, this girl's touch and voice sickened him, and he would have shaken her off with small ceremony but for his instant apprehension of the trouble she could so easily make for him if he antagonized her.

"What are you doing out alone so late?" he asked coldly, steeling himself to endure her hold on his arm.

"Seein' you safe home, Mr. Wagenhorst!" she laughed. "Ain't you the slick guy? But you ain't no slicker'n me! I was on to you the minute you spoke up, fur Liddy Fitzenberger so quick the other night in the potato patch—when you wouldn't have it she wasn't just as good as me or any one else! You ain't the only fellah that's stuck on her looks, and I ain't the only girl in Wirginsburg that wishes she'd take her fancy mug where the fellahs couldn't see it! Yes, they all want to be makin' goo-goo eyes at it! But to think that *you*, Elm Wagenhorst, as high as you hold yourself, would be settin' up keepin' comp'ny at the minister's house with Liddy Fitzenberger, yet! You needn't deny it, fur I seen you through the blinds! Yes, I *seen* how you two stood there holdin' hands together! What do you think your *pop* would say if he knowed it?"

"It's my going to the home of his enemies, the Armstrongs, that he'd mind

—not anything else—even though I went there to get some necessary books for my studies,” said Elmer, instantly sorry that he had not thought to borrow a Greek or Latin book from the minister. “If you choose to raise a row, Minnie, by speaking of it, I suppose you’ll have to do it.”

“Elm Wagenhorst, I don’t *b’leeve* you went to the minister’s fur nothin’ but to see Liddy Fitzenberger! Fur you know good enough you wouldn’t have the dare to go to see her at her own house!”

“My father wouldn’t be half so angry at that as at my going to the parsonage,” Elmer repeated, raging inwardly at the galling humiliation of having to appease this girl by accounting to her for his movements.

“Was you, or wasn’t you, settin’ up keepin’ comp’ny with Liddy Fitzenberger this evening?” Minnie put it to him straight.

“But why on earth,” exclaimed Elmer, exasperated, “do you imagine I would account to *you* for what I do?”

“Well, you’d better!” retorted the girl fiercely. “I’m stuck on you and you know it! And I ain’t the guy to leave another girl cut me out—anyways, a thing like Liddy Fitzenberger, that no one in Wirginsburg would wipe their feet on! You know well enough you didn’t go to the parsonage to ask reverend nothin’ about some old lessons or whatever!”

“Can’t you see that my father couldn’t possibly hate the Fitzenbergers as he hates the Armstrongs?”

“Yous two was *alone* in that parlor settin’! I *seen* you!”

“Very well! You try to raise a row, and I’ll have my father send you straight home to your grandmother!” he threatened.

“Ha!” Minnie laughed sarcastically. “You’ll have him send me home! He’ll raise my wages, that’s what he’ll do! And your Sally sayin’ to me to-night,

‘Can’t you *see*, Min Doerr, that our Elmer’s too high-educated and high-toned fur a common, ignorant girl like you?’ I’ll show you and your Sally somepin! I’ll learn her if she can look at me so cross and ignorant as she’s all the time doin’! Why, she’ll bump right up agin’ me that ongraceful and never say excuse me! I ain’t *takin’* it no more! Unless you pass me your promise you won’t never look at that there Liddy Fitzenberger ag’in, I’m goin’ straight to your pop and blab, so I am!”

“To-morrow morning I shall tell my father myself that I went to the parsonage to get some information from Mr. Armstrong. I warn you—if you try to raise trouble, home you go! And I’ll never look at you or speak to you again, Minnie!”

This last clause, though verbally a threat, was spoken in a carefully considered tone of mingled coaxing and regret, as if it would be a trial indeed never to look at or speak to her again.

It accomplished its purpose. Minnie’s anger melted. She pressed closer to his side.

“*Ain’t* you stuck on Liddy Fitzenberger, El—Mr. Wagenhorst?”

“It isn’t necessary to discuss her. What do you think my father would say to you if he knew you were out of the house at this hour—after ten o’clock?”

“Well, he *don’t* know! Say, Mr. Wagenhorst, if I pass you my promise that I won’t blab on you—what then?”

“What then? What do you mean?”

“You know what I mean well enough.”

They had reached the pavement in front of the doctor’s house, and Elmer stopped short and extricated himself from her clutch.

“I’ve a terrific headache, Minnie. I’ve got to stop in here at the doctor’s and get some medicine. You go on home without me.”

Before she could answer, he had

mounted the steps and had gone into the doctor's office.

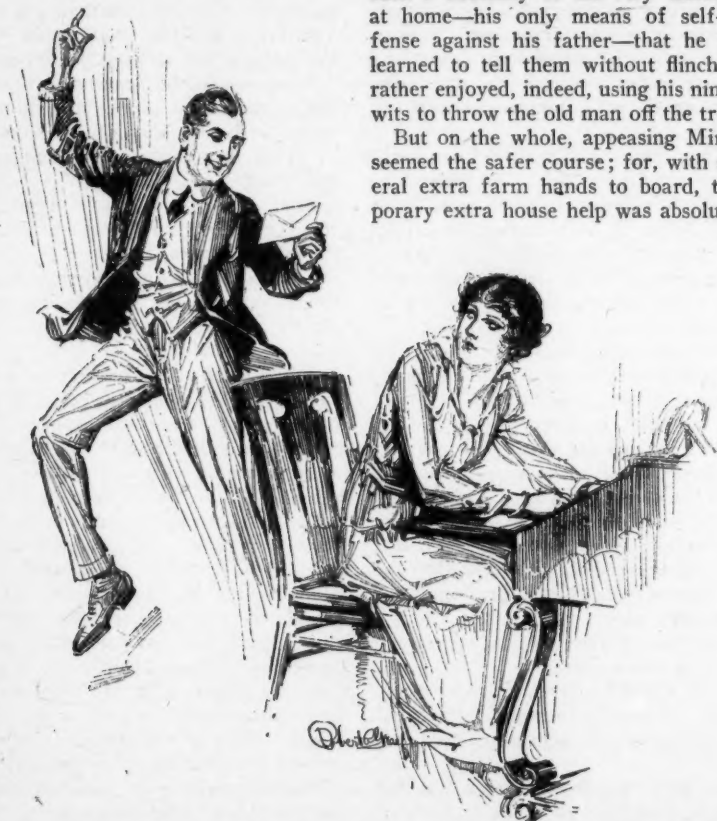
"She'll lurk out there until I come out!" he thought. "I'll ask the doc to let me out the back way for a short cut home. Another minute of the hussy and I'd murder her, damn her!"

He went through the form of getting some medicine from the doctor; then hurried home across fields, almost running lest that wretched girl overtake him.

He considered earnestly, as he lay

sleepless on his bed that night, what he would better do—whether it would be well just to go to his father and tell him what "a damned nuisance" Minnie Doerr was becoming, and simply deny it if the girl told her yarn of his having been to the parsonage; or whether, on the other hand, he should try to appease Minnie by noticing her a bit. The latter would be easy enough, but it would hurt his dignity and his conscience far more than lying to his father would do. Recourse to lies had become such a necessity to his very existence at home—his only means of self-defense against his father—that he had learned to tell them without flinching, rather enjoyed, indeed, using his nimble wits to throw the old man off the track.

But on the whole, appeasing Minnie seemed the safer course; for, with several extra farm hands to board, temporary extra house help was absolutely



"Brother nearly had a fit when he saw the address. He read it with a shout, and then, with a wild Indian war whoop, he went bounding upstairs six steps at a time!"



essential and not so easily secured that Minnie could be lightly dispensed with.

At breakfast next morning, Elmer actually pitied his young brother, Sam, as he saw the boy's rage and suffering over his own friendly bantering with Minnie and her eager and excited retorts, which brought roars of laughter from the other boys and even from his grim father, who, in common with his sons, was not unmoved by the girl's coarse allurements.

The mild surprise of his mother and the look of disgust and disappointment with which Sally regarded his overtures to Minnie were a little hard to bear, for his sister's exalted idea of him was one of Elmer's consolations this summer for the many unpleasantnesses of his life.

After breakfast, before joining the other men in the fields, he lingered in the kitchen, trying to get a word alone with Sally. It was intolerable to him that any one, even his plain, uneducated sister, should have such an opinion of him as he had read in her face during breakfast.

But Minnie so persistently dogged his steps, and Sally so ignored his attempts to speak to her, that he had to give it up; or, rather, he feigned to give it up. Putting on his big straw hat, he left the kitchen, but instead of following the other men, he circled the house, and by the time he had returned to the kitchen door, he saw, to his satisfaction, that Minnie had departed to tidy the bedrooms of the "hired men" and that Sally was alone, washing the dishes, his mother having gone to the spring house to churn butter.

"Just a word to you, Sally," he said curtly. "I don't want you to think that I don't loathe and despise that fool of a girl."

He spoke hurriedly, for he was far more embarrassed at breaking through the habitual reserve that the members of the family held toward one another

than he would have been by the most difficult imaginable social contingency; and he had, poor fellow, known many a difficult one.

"But, Elmer," said Sally wonderingly, evidently touched by his caring enough for her opinion to come to her with an apologetic explanation of himself, "if you loathe and despise her, why do you encourage her bold ways and act like as if you liked her so well?"

"Listen, Sally. Last night I had to see the Reverend Mr. Armstrong about something, and Minnie saw me at the parsonage and threatened to tell—pop. You know the row *that* would raise! I'm jollying her to keep her quiet."

"You was at the *parsonage*, Elmer?" Sally stared at him incredulously. "Ach, now, you wasn't!"

"I *had* to see Mr. Armstrong about something."

"But pop would near kill you fur going to see Reverend Armstrong, Elmer, and you know it!"

"That's why I'm jollying Minnie Doerr—to keep her from letting it out. Mr. Armstrong is useful to me. He's a fine Latin scholar."

Sally looked at her brother for a moment blankly; then slowly an understanding light came into her eyes. Her memory was reverting to that suspicion of her mother's of a summer two years ago—that Elmer was "making up" to Liddy Fitzenberger; and every one knew that Liddy Fitzenberger almost lived at the Lutheran parsonage! Was Elmer seeing *that girl* secretly at the parsonage? That would be so very much worse than his condescending to the likes of Minnie Doerr, who, though poor, was from a family respected in the neighborhood. Sally caught her breath. Why, if she thought a brother of hers was making up to the daughter of those Fitzenbergers, she'd go herself and warn her father about it!

Elmer, not knowing what was in his sister's mind, did not understand the

coldness with which she turned away from him to her work. Thinking he had conceded a good deal in taking the trouble to explain himself to her, he felt offended at her lack of appreciation of it.

He stalked from the kitchen angrily, banging the door as he went out. Women were the curse of men's lives! There was no peace in a world where women lived; they hindered your work, deviled your senses, taxed your thought and your time to no purpose, burdened you with their support, and, in these days, refused to do the only thing they were good for—to breed young.

"I'd like to blot them off the face of the earth!" he told himself fiercely as he strode out to the fields.

But when that night the mail brought him, to his surprise and delight, a long letter from Nedra Appleton, in response to three he had dispatched to her since his return home, the world of women seemed less luridly devilish to him.

Nedra's letter was characteristic—cool, indifferent, daring. Her unique personality spoke in every word of it. Elmer, as he read it, could hear the rustle of her skirts, inhale the faint, sweet perfume of her clothing, and feel the velvet touch of her hand.

At the end of her letter she wrote:

A curious thing happened this morning. Brother came in here while I was writing all this to you, and, picking up the envelope addressed to you that was lying on my desk, he nearly had a fit when he saw the address. He read it with a shout: "*Virginsburg, Berks County, Pennsylvania*;" and then, with a wild Indian war whoop, he went bounding upstairs six steps at a time! I ran after him, demanding what was the matter, but at the threshold of his room, he confronted me with a diabolic grin and banged the door in my face. He was closeted in his room all morning; and when at noon he came forth with a thick envelope for the mails, he displayed to me the post-office address. It was Virginsburg. But he won't tell me what he is writing to you about at such fearful length and in such excitement. Will you tell me? I'm not curious about many things,

but I *am* rather curious as to the vast and absorbing correspondence going on between you and Brother, over which he seems so radiantly delighted.

Elmer, however, was not interested in "Brother's" eccentricities. What fired his imagination was the hope this friendly letter gave him of the ultimate realization of his high ambition to wed into the Appleton family; a goal that, from the viewpoint of Virginsburg, seemed even more unattainable, and therefore more desirable, than it had at Collegeville. And the letter coming to him at just this psychological moment in his career, when his nerves were raw and his self-respect lacerated, the touch of Nedra's cool, languid spirit upon his deeply troubled one was infinitely soothing, as well as tremendously stimulating.

He sat up half that night writing to her. It was not until he had signed his name that he remembered to add a postscript answering her question about Gail:

I've not yet received that voluminous letter you say Gail has been inditing to me. But I can make a pretty good guess as to what it's all about. He has discovered his "soul's mate," I suspect, in the author of "*A Village Tragedy*," and is raving through a whole quire of stationery about her virtues. I'm eagerly awaiting the arrival of his eulogy. But whatever the lady's gifts and charms, I remain unmoved. After knowing Nedra—I cannot tell you how I thrill as I write that name; how full of poetry it is to me!—after knowing you, Nedra, how can any other maiden ever move me more? Don't you know how unique you are? How other women pale beside you—how you— But I dare not let myself go on as I yearn to do, or you'll accuse me of "making love," and I've not yet the right to do that. To earn that right is now the sole object of my existence.

For a few days after receiving Nedra's letter, Elmer seemed to walk on air. And yet, with the fresh impetus to his ambition that it gave him, he found himself in an anomalous and irritating position; for while chafing

more than ever under Liddy's assumption that he was betrothed to her, his desire to see her freely and frequently was not one whit abated.

"Was ever a man so beset?" he asked himself one night when, at sight of her on the street ahead of him, he was obliged to curb his hot impulse to rush to her side; while only a moment before he had been wondering how, the next time he and Liddy were alone together, he could best convey to her—the only honorable thing to do—that he did not, of course, take their engagement seriously.

But the sudden, unexpected sight of her on the street brought uppermost, for the moment, all his tenderness for her. As he walked on thoughtfully, after seeing her go into the Lutheran parsonage, he pitied her profoundly.

"Poor little Liddy! She's so dead sure of me, it's going to be horribly hard on her, confound it! I wish to Heaven I didn't have to hurt her—to hurt anything so tender and sweet! It makes a man feel like a brute, sure enough! But," he firmly concluded, as he always concluded such reflections, "she can't possibly blame me!"

When ten days passed by without his having again made any effort to see Liddy, he began to feel a vague pique at her for showing no sign of impatience at his delay or distress at his neglect.

"She's so careful not to put me in any jeopardy. That's why she doesn't try in any way to communicate with me," he justified her silence and aloofness. "She's probably suffering—longing for me every hour! But she's so unselfish, she'd rather suffer than sacrifice me."

And a proper feminine attitude he considered it.

When, at the end of two weeks, he began to consider whether he might not, now, casually drop in on her some evening for a short call, he realized how

great was the risk; for he had, during those two weeks, been aware of a double espionage upon his movements. Both Sally and Minnie were watching him night and day. Though it enraged him, he was helpless under it, and he did not dare, under these circumstances, go again to the parsonage.

It flashed upon him one day, as he worked in the fields, that as the Fitzenbergers' house was the very last place on earth his spies would expect him to visit, that was really a safer place for him to call on Liddy than at the Armstrongs'. No sooner had he reached this conclusion than he put the experiment at once to the test. Telling his father that his nightly studies necessitated his consulting some volumes in the Allentown library, he took the car one evening, rode only to the first stopping place, got off, and walked back a half mile to the kitchen door of Liddy's home. It was dark and rainy, and he was very sure that he would not be observed on such a night.

It seemed to him very strange indeed—with the tradition and prejudice of the village so deeply ingrained in him—to be knocking at the Fitzenbergers' door.

When it was opened, and he saw before him in the lighted kitchen, not Liddy, but her fair, plump stepmother, his heart sank. Suppose, after his trouble and risk in getting here this evening—not to mention his long two weeks of waiting—Liddy were not at home, but over at the parsonage! Such "darned luck" would be more than he could bear.

"Is Liddy home?" he asked, lifting his hat to Mrs. Fitzenberger, though he knew that she would be either amazed or amused, or both, at such a formality. Never before in his life had he spoken to this woman, and he looked at her curiously, as one might look at the villainness of a novel upon suddenly encountering her in real life.

"Liddy? Well, yes, fur a wonder she is home, fur onct," the woman answered, in a voice of honeyed sweetness that, in view of her history, made Elmer's flesh creep. "Did you want to see her?"

"If I may," he replied, stepping in out of the rain, though he had not been invited to do so.

"It's Wagenhorst's son, Elmer, ain't?" asked Joye, closing the door and smiling upon him with a broad, soft smile, which, with the gaze of her pale, mild eyes, seemed almost to cast a spell on him.

"Yes," he managed to answer, pulling himself together, "I'm Elmer Wagenhorst. This is Mrs. Fitzenberger?" he asked, bowing.

"Yes, sir. Pleased to make your acquaintance," she answered, also bowing.

"May I see Liddy?"

"What do you want off of Liddy, mister?"

"I came to call on her."

Joye's sweet smile became suddenly stiff and set.

"You want to set up and keep company with Liddy?" she asked.

"To visit with her—yes."

"I didn't know that you two was so well acquainted together—more'n that she buys milk and butter off of you."

"Liddy and I are very good friends." He felt safe in saying this to Mrs. Fitzenberger, who would have no opportunity to spread it further.

"Good friends! You and Liddy!" She leaned limply against the closed kitchen door and gazed at him strangely. "It wonders me, mister," she added softly after a moment, "that sich a tony gentleman as what you are—judgin' by your appearance, anyhow, and your grand manners—would see anythin' in Liddy Fitzenberger. You certainly don't think she's pretty, do you?"

Elmer laughed lightly.

"Would you mind telling her, Mrs. Fitzenberger, that I am here?"

"Well, I ast Liddy this evenin' wouldn't she, now, please stay home fur *one* night and relieve me a little. I'm so depleted, that way, from takin' care of my sick mister. It's a wonder she consented. I often seen you passin' here, mister," she continued, still leaning limply against the closed door and holding him with her queer gaze, "and I certainly did, now, admire your appearance! I'm glad to meet up with you. There ain't any other person in this willage I *would* care to associate with, unlest it would be Reverend and Mrs. Armstrong. The folks here is all so ignorant and vulgar, and me, I'm so refined. It ain't no one in Wirginburg could appreciate *you*, mister, like I could. Leastways if you're what you *look* to be, anyhow. But I don't see what you see in Liddy."

Elmer, standing grimly before her, did not answer.

"She's sich a double-faced girl! So hard-hearted and all fur herself!"

"Poor Liddy!" he thought compassionately. "Poor little Liddy!"

"Will you come on in the parlor and set a while, mister?" she at last invited him, leading the way through a narrow, dark hall to her grotesquely furnished parlor.

She turned on the light and then, to Elmer's consternation, instead of departing to summon Liddy, she seated herself comfortably, as if for a long, good time, in a big armchair directly in front of him. He noticed how comely she was—how fair and smooth her skin, how abundant and shining her hair, how full and red her lips.

"Good heavens!" he thought. "What am I in for?"

"You see," she began confidentially, "mister, he's so much fur havin' me close by him every minute that I near die of en-wee. So when he does go to sleep fur a little while, I ast Liddy to

stay with him and leave me rest. When he falls awake again, I must be right there to hold his hand fur him and be his stay and prop that way, you know. Indeed, ever since I stood up with him before the minister to say 'yes,' I've been his little comfort. So he always *calls* me, anyhow."

Elmer earnestly hoped that the sick man would "fall awake" very soon. He took a glance over the garish room and thought how awful it would be for him, with his now highly cultivated taste, to marry a girl who had always lived in an environment like this.

"No doubt Liddy thinks this very fine indeed and would want to model her own home after it. Don't I know how grand *I* would once have considered it!"

"Mister, he's always been sich a devoted lover to me," continued Mrs. Fitzenberger. "I know not what I'm a-goin' to do when he passes away, I'll miss it so! I won't soon find another like him, after Gawd closes his eyes in death."

"Is he dangerously ill?"

"He ain't anythin' so well."

"Liddy told me he was very ill."

"When did you *see* Liddy, mister?" she asked, in her most dulcet voice.

"At the Lutheran parsonage one evening."

"She didn't speak nothin' to me or her pop about meetin' you. She's awful underhanded. I don't know sometimes what *to* think of Liddy."

"Probably she didn't consider her meeting me important enough to mention," Elmer smiled.

"And she's got Reverend Armstrong that blinded about her! I wonder his missus stands it. I often tol' Liddy, a'ready, how crool she was, to go tryin' to break up that sweet home over there by comin' between him and her. But Liddy, she's too much all fur herself to care. Only so's she's got the fellahs

runnin' after her—married *or* single—that's all she looks to!"

"Do you think your husband will wake soon?" Elmer asked, controlling his disgust and impatience.

"No, he'll stay sleepin' till a good while, yet, and leave me enjoy your comp'ny."

"But is it necessary, then, for Liddy to stay with him? Can't I see her?"

"Well, you see, if mister fell awake, and I wasn't called right aways, he'd near break his heart. So Liddy must be there to call me till he does fall awake. Would you like fur me to read you some of my pomes that I composed?"

But before he could reply, there was a light step in the room overhead, then on the stairs outside the parlor door; and the next moment, to Mrs. Fitzenberger's evidently deep displeasure, Liddy came into the parlor.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

"I heard your voice, Elmer, and it was such a fine surprise!" she said, her face alight with pleasure as she came forward and held out her hand.

"Did you come down and let your pop all alone up there?" Mrs. Fitzenberger asked with gentle melancholy, as Liddy and Elmer sat down.

"You know, Joye," answered Liddy, looking very directly at her stepmother, "he asked us to leave him alone while he read the evening paper."

"He darsent be let alone. Will you go and stay with him? I need a little rest so bad!"

"I've been with him all the afternoon, while you've been resting, you know," Liddy said quietly, but definitely. "He wishes to be alone now, and I shall do as he wishes."

"You won't *do* it to stay with him?" Joye sadly and reproachfully inquired.

"Not now. The doctor insists he must be humored."





She walked with a slow majesty from the room, Elmer standing, with his hand on the back of his chair, until she had gone.

"Ain't you got *no* feelin' fur your poor, sick father, Liddy? Not to speak of helpin' *me* out oncet in a while. Though, to be sure, I don't often ast anythin' off of you."

Without replying, Liddy turned from her with an air of finality and spoke to Elmer.

"You're getting to look like your old self, Elmer," she smiled. "A sun-browned farmer!"

"Am I?"

He was feeling some surprise at the way Liddy had held her own with her stepmother. He wondered with deep misgiving whether Mrs. Fitzenberger

intended to remain with them all evening.

"You look pale, Liddy," he said solicitously. "Aren't you well?"

"Loss of sleep. Father needs attention at night, and Joye sleeps so heavily that I have to be on hand."

"So you do the nursing night and day?"

"Joye, of course, helps."

"I am glad, Liddy, you can tell a *little* of the truth," put in Mrs. Fitzenberger mournfully.

"When I go back to Collegeville"—Elmer hastily tried to divert the woman's thrusts at Liddy—"my sun-

burned aspect will give me credit for being, not a farmer, but a seaside golf player, I suppose."

"You can be thankful you're *not* a social dawdler, can't you? You've a goodly inheritance, Elmer, from your capable, industrious ancestors."

"A goodly inheritance?" He shrugged. "If I could have chosen my ancestry, I hardly think I'd be a Wagenhorst!"

"But then you wouldn't have known me. Think what you'd have missed!"

"The only thing I *would* have missed!"

"I'm not so sure," said Liddy doubtfully. "To come from a family that for generations have been upright, industrious farmers, of clean and simple lives—that is a goodly inheritance, Elmer."

Of course Elmer readily understood how Liddy, in her ignorance of life, would think that there was nobody better than he. It was pleasant, too, to have her think it.

"An inheritance," he explained his own more enlightened view, "of ignorance, prejudice, narrow-mindedness, bigotry, ugliness, commonness!"

"Is that the way you have come to feel, Elmer?" she asked curiously.

"I would choose an inheritance of culture, good taste, fine instincts. What I have of these, I have had to strive for."

He felt annoyed that Liddy, not seeming to mind the presence of her stepmother, made no effort to get rid of her. Didn't she want to be alone with him? Well, *he* wouldn't "stand for" the woman's defrauding him of whatever of comfort or pleasure the evening might have for him.

"I have something I'd like to discuss with you, Liddy, if I might see you alone?"

"We'll go to the dining room. Will you excuse us, Joye?"

"You got no need to trouble your-

self to move," Mrs. Fitzenberger interposed. She rose slowly, wearing the expression of one who, though deeply wronged, yet bears no ill will. "To be sure, I don't stay where my comp'ny ain't agreeable. You can see fur yourself, mister, how Liddy's all fur herself, and how I got to take *insults* off of her in my own house! No, yous can just stay settin', and I'll go away. I'll go upstairs to my love, who his ongrateful and onloving child neglects somepin turrible!"

She walked with a slow majesty from the room, Elmer standing, with his hand on the back of his chair, until she had gone.

He looked at Liddy as he sat down again, expecting to see her covered with embarrassment. But she was sitting very still, her hands clasped in her lap, her eyes downcast, and a faint amusement lurking about her mouth. She wore a dainty summer frock of some pale-pink material, which gave her such an ethereal, cloudlike aspect that Elmer felt, if he touched her, his hand must certainly pass through her.

"Liddy," he said impetuously, as he sat down again, "I haven't realized what you've been up against all these years! To have had to live all your life with that woman!"

"I don't mind it any more, Elmer dear, as I used to. I seem to have so many blessings she doesn't have that I can only pity her. She really hasn't the power any longer to hurt me. And, Elmer, I find that a sense of the absurdity of some things in life does save one a lot of suffering. It would help *you*, dear, over some of the things I'm afraid you are letting mean too much to you this summer."

"I'm afraid I'm not big enough to find some things humorous, Liddy. Your stepmother, for instance! I insist upon being very sorry for you that you have to live with her."

"Oh, well, dear, it won't be long now,

will it, before you will be able to take me away from it all?"

Elmer felt the hot blood surge to his forehead. How could he let such a remark as that go by unchallenged, when he was so firmly resolved that he never *would* marry her?

"I'm glad you came to see me tonight, Elmer—and *here!*" she said, before he could get himself in hand. "Are you, then, at last defying your father?"

"No, indeed, I'm not! I can't afford to! I came here, Liddy, because it's safer than going to the parsonage."

"Oh! Is that why? Well, anyway, you've always been absolutely honest with me, haven't you? When I've sometimes felt—unreasonably, I know—a little hurt at your fear of having our friendship known, I've always comforted myself with the thought that at least you wouldn't pretend you *weren't* afraid. Some men would be too cowardly to admit such a fear. But I'm glad you're here because—I've something to ask you."

She looked suddenly so grave and earnest that Elmer steeled himself for—he knew not what. He dreaded to learn what ultimatum she might be going to put to him that would force his hand.

"Do you remember, Elmer, what I wrote you last spring about my wanting to hear from *you*, and from no one else, the story of my father's offense against society? If you and I can't face this thing together, dear, what about our life together—when we may often have to face worse things? Haven't you the courage, Elmer, to tell me?"

"Do you mean to say, Liddy, that if I refused to tell you that story, you'd—break with me?"

He asked it almost eagerly, it would give him such an easy escape from a painful predicament.

"Oh, Elmer, I shouldn't think of *forcing* you, with such an alternative

as that, to tell me what you didn't wish to tell me," she assured him. "To leave you no least choice about it! You must do it voluntarily or not at all. What I do mean is that I am sure our life together would be far more true and right and even beautiful, Elmer, if there were not this secrecy and mystery between us."

He was silent a moment, the blood beating in his temples. He knew that his hour was come; he must tell her, now, that he did not mean to marry her. *How* to do it—how to go at it with the least possible hurt to her—that was what, with all his mind, he tried to decide.

"Liddy," he began in a tone of gentleness which he instantly feared she might interpret as tenderness, "I agree with you that between you and the man you marry there must be no reserves, no mystery, no secrecy, a clear and open communion——"

"I'm so glad you feel that way!" she spoke in eagerly. "Isn't it remarkable, Elmer, the way you and I always—or nearly always—see things from the same angle?"

He was silent for a moment, frowning thoughtfully over the task on his hands.

"See things from the same angle? How can that be possible, Liddy—when I——"

But again, as he hesitated, she spoke in.

"I know what you are trying to tell me." She nodded. "I know I haven't been perfectly open with *you*, Elmer, about everything in my life of late. I seem, somehow, to have grown into a feeling of constraint with you that I did not feel at all in the beginning of our friendship. I've puzzled over it; I've not understood it at all; and now I begin to realize that it must have been this secrecy between us about my father's misfortune—or crime. Let us have done with it, Elmer dear!"

"The feeling of constraint you have felt with me, Liddy, has had nothing to do with the history of your father. You have felt what I hardly need to point out to you—our growing apart through two years of widest difference in associations, environment, education. Don't you see how inevitable it was we *should* grow apart?"

"Dear Elmer, I have tried to be faithful to you even in thought. If you feel I have failed, I am deeply ashamed and sorry. I——"

"No doubt you've been enough more faithful than I've been!" he sadly admitted.

"It's generous of you to exonerate me from blame, but——"

"Heavens, Liddy, you don't suppose I'm blaming you! How could I hold you responsible, dear girl, for what is really no one's fault? It was inevitable that my different environment and associations should have its effect on me, should have made my old life impossible to me. I could no more help it than I could help the color of my hair!"

Liddy looked at him for a moment uncomprehendingly. Then slowly the color left her face, even her lips.

"What are you telling me, Elmer?" she asked breathlessly.

He leaned forward and took her trembling hand in both of his. It felt like a little fluttering bird between his own great, strong hands.

"Liddy dear," he said, his own face growing pale, "the constraint you have felt in your relation to me has been the natural result of our growing apart through my so different life and work and development. Don't you see?"

"You have felt it, too, Elmer?"

"How could I not feel it, Liddy?"

"You have felt it in my letters—that you were leaving me behind you? Is that what you are saying? For it has been only through our letters that we have known each other for over a year and a half."

For the first time Elmer realized that he had *not* felt it in her letters. Her letters! He had never received one from her that had not been a spiritual and a mental stimulus!

"No, I can't honestly say I felt it in your letters, Liddy. On the contrary. It is rather my own changed standards of life, of taste, of people, of manners and customs—while you, Liddy, have stayed on here in Virginsburg, unchanged."

"But, Elmer," she pleaded, in a tone that seemed to his bared nerves to be piteously begging for her very life, "I have never, like you, been a part of this life in Virginsburg, so I've not had to outgrow it as you have had to. Even my own home has been extraneous to my real life; I've not been in and of it. Until I met you, my only real life was in books. My only personal relations have been with you and the Armstrongs."

"But, Liddy," he answered, summoning all his courage to resist her pleading and her arguments, "you cannot, of course, have any conception of the sort of associations I have had for the past year and a half—the kind of people I've been intimate with——"

"Like the Appletons?"

"Yes, like the Appletons. You've no idea of such people, Liddy."

"No?"

"No, of course you haven't, dear girl. Don't you see for yourself that I'm not the man who asked you, in all his rawness and inexperience, to become engaged to him?"

"You seem very much the same to me, Elmer—except of course," she added, withdrawing her hand and leaning back in her chair, "that you've acquired some jaunty manners."

He winced as if he had been struck, while he regarded with suspicion and amazement the fact that the color was returning to her face and that that

faint, lurking amusement was stealing back into the corners of her mouth.

"That is all the change you find in me, is it?" he asked testily. "Why, then, that sense of constraint you have felt with me, Liddy? Don't you realize, child, that your fine sensitiveness detected what your actual intelligence could not—the fact that essentially I was no longer on your—that we were not any longer on the same plane of life?"

"Perhaps that is what I was feeling, Elmer—that we were no longer on the same level, if, indeed, we ever were. I have sometimes doubted, of late, whether I really knew what love was."

"Poor child!" he thought. "She's trying to save her pride! What a brute I am!"

"I could almost wish, Liddy," he said compassionately, "that you did *not* love me—if loving me causes you suffering."

"And how about you, Elmer? You find, do you, that, after all, you don't love me?"

"As the best friend I ever had or ever hope to have, Liddy dear!"

"But friendship, you are convinced, is not a true basis for marriage?"

"I would say that while real friendship is absolutely essential to a successful marriage, it isn't enough."

"Just what is it you think our relation lacks, Elmer?"

He marveled at the self-control she exercised. She spoke so quietly; only the glitter of her eyes betrayed the emotion she really was suffering. It was pathetic, the dignity with which she argued and pleaded to convince him that she still could be his.

"Perhaps, dear," he said gravely, "I shall be kindest by being plainest—hard as you may think me. What we lack is this: I have become essentially a man of the world. I shall one day, I hope and believe, be a man of big affairs. You are a dear little unsophisticated

village girl, Liddy, wholly unqualified to take the place in the world that my wife must one day hold."

"In what way am I unqualified, Elmer?"

It was strange, the impersonal curiosity with which she seemed to ask it! It was almost indelicate of her, this persistence in her effort to hold him. And indelicacy was certainly the last thing on earth he would ever have expected of Liddy!

"In what way are you unqualified? But, Liddy dear"—he smiled—"in *every* way! As unqualified as a nun! What do you know of the world and of society?"

"A knowledge of the world and of society, then, is essential?"

"Emphatically."

"And you have acquired that?"

"No one in Collegeville suspects that I was not to the manner born. Of course I've gone through a hard schooling."

"Of course." She nodded. "You have worked hard at it, haven't you? Perhaps I, too, could acquire it—if I thought it worth the effort?"

Elmer, regarding her very kindly, slowly shook his head.

"No, dear, no. Resign yourself to the inevitable. It can't be; and you'll suffer less from your—our disappointment, if you don't struggle against it. We can always be the best of friends, Liddy, surely?"

"I hope so, Elmer."

"I am so relieved, dear, that you take it so sensibly and quietly."

"Did you expect me to be noisy about it?"

"I never expect anything from you, Liddy, but what is fine and good."

"And yet you consider me unfit to be your wife—the wife of any man of worldly position?"

"The best proof of it, Liddy, is your own inability to recognize it."

She considered this in grave silence.





At the threshold, she turned for an instant. Her eyes were brilliant, her face illumined.  
"Good night, Elmer!"

In spite of her calmness, there was a strained, tense expression in her eyes, as if she were struggling with tears.

"Well, Elmer," she said finally, suddenly rising and holding out her hand, "I thank you for coming to me so honestly and frankly with what, I am sure, has been no easy thing for you to tell me. I know I would not have been equal to the demand for such courage."

He also rose and again held her hand in both his own.

"I have at least tried to act honorably toward you, Liddy."

"You are so strong! Even honor takes a back seat with me when it comes to hurting any one else. But I see, now, that that is weakness. You have been strong enough to be true to your convictions, as I see, now, I have *not* been. Well, Elmer, I am grateful to you for the happiness you have given me. And I shall always be your good friend—if I am worthy to be *that*."

"Liddy! You're the greatest trump! You forgive me for the pain I've had to cause you?"

"There is nothing to forgive—nothing! Less than nothing! Good night, Elmer."

"Why must I go?"

"To give me a chance to recover. I've had a shock—a surprise. I've been so stupid never to have suspected—I've been so absorbed in my own affairs! I've been so blind——"

She broke off, turned away, and walked to the door. But at the threshold, she turned for an instant. Her eyes were brilliant, her face illumined.

"Good night, Elmer!"

He started toward her, but, speechless, she waved him back; and the next instant she had disappeared.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

It was an hour later. Liddy was shut up alone in her own bedroom. Sitting at her desk, her face still bearing the illumined look with which she had left Elmer, she was opening and reading, one after another, a pile of letters that lay before her.

A remarkable room, this, for "a little unsophisticated village girl." It would have given Elmer—who an hour before had been shuddering at the idea of marrying a girl who probably admired the fearful parlor of her home—a shock of astonishment had he seen it. Two months ago Liddy had refurnished it. While everything about it was dainty and charming—it was all in white and Copenhagen blue—it suggested, nevertheless, that some very strenuous labor must go on here—the low, wide, white bookcase, filled with volumes in French and English, running across one entire end of the wall; the large, white desk piled with manuscripts and notebooks and equipped with a businesslike quantity of stationery. These things, and

the half dozen good copies of famous paintings on the walls, made the room look rather more like a study than a bedchamber. But it was here, only, that Liddy could live her real life at home; the rest of the house, garnished in her stepmother's taste and presenting a grotesque contrast to this lovely little room, scarcely touched her existence.

She was rereading portions of the numerous letters which, ever since last January, had been accumulating in her possession.

January 15.

DEAR THEO: There is something in the personality of your heroine, Theo Starland, which so vitally appeals to me that I must think she exists in you; and so, when I take up my pen to write to you, that trusty weapon of mine refuses to write "Miss Berger"—which, anyway, you admit is not your name—but insists upon calling you "Theo."

Dear Theo, do you know what you have come to mean to me—to me, who have gloriously risen out of an environment steeped in worldliness into the freedom of the spirit? O my comrade, I greet you! For you *are* my comrade. And my spirit hungers and thirsts and yearns for you—loves you!"

January 30.

You tell me that you are of extremely humble origin. But it is your soul I love, and that, I know, is of very royal birth. You tell me that, like the Theo of your book, there is a stain upon your name, a shame and disgrace upon your household. I would remind you that the man who loved Theo rejoiced to stand at her side in her struggle to rise out of the tragedy of her environment. You, then, must believe a man capable of a love that recognizes no material hindrances to the life of the spirit.

No manuscript that has ever come to our office has ever taken such hold of me as this of your book; *our* book, I love to call it, for so deeply at one do I feel with its spirit that it seems to me sometimes that I must have written it!

I am planning to come to Allentown to see you just as soon as you give me permission.

February 10.

Your mandate that I may not come to see you until your book has proven a success is very hard to obey. If, by any strange

chance, it should *not* be a business success, I warn you *now* that, though the great public may never know you, I don't mean to be defrauded of my soul's own. I mean to find you, to know you face to face as well as I know you in our book and in your letters. You shall not escape me. Not a second time in a man's life does such blessedness overtake him as the finding of his spirit's true mate! And now that I have found you—you for whom my soul has waited—be assured I shall not give you up. By the ruling of the gods, you are mine and I am yours.

February 28.

You suggest that when I see you face to face, I may find you "an ugly, dowdy, unattractive person." With the soul of Theo in you, you couldn't be that. And, anyway, I've seen your photograph! What do you think of that? Your real name is "Liddy." Do you suppose, Theo, that I could see your face and not recognize it? A friend of mine showed me a photograph of his "girl," and so instantly did my mind leap to a recognition of the personality in that lovely face that I knew her at once as *my* girl—my Theo of our book! Of course, the words, "Allentown, Pennsylvania," on the back of the photograph confirmed my impression. Will you think me quite crazy for feeling so sure that "Liddy" is my Theo? If she isn't, I'm in a quandary. I know not which I love better—Theo or Liddy.

Did you ever happen to hear of a young man of Allentown, of an unbounded ambition and an abnormal capacity for gulping and digesting textbooks, named Elmer Wagenhorst?

March 10.

I am chafing under the restraint you have put upon me—that I must not see you until the book has come out and succeeded. For, don't you see?—I have written no book by which I may be revealed to you as you have been to me; so my only means of reaching you is by personal intercourse. Unless, indeed, you find something of me, dear Theo, in these feverish outpourings of mine which the postman brings you.

Your neglecting to answer my inquiry as to one Elmer Wagenhorst confirms my suspicion that you are his "girl." I have sounded him as to the original of that precious photograph he owns, but he is impenetrable. He has a capacity for "sitting tight" and telling nothing about himself that amounts to genius. He is an intimate friend of ours, but he never speaks to us of his personal relations. It was only by brutally impertinent question-

ing that I got out of him the fact that "Liddy" loved him; and I gave him fair warning that I meant to cut him out. If I can't do it any other way, I'll throw him into the lake. He's subject to cramps in the water. I'll have no compunctions—for *he's* not Theo's mate!

March 20.

It is very maddening the way you ignore my questions as to whether you are "Liddy"; whether you are in love with Elmer Wagenhorst; whether the story of Theo is indeed your own history; whether you don't think you can manage to fall out of love with Elmer and in love with your publisher. However, I console myself with the fact that at least you don't answer me with a conventional horror at my impertinent personalities. You only ignore them. So I shall continue to hug to my soul the dear delusion—if, indeed, it is a delusion—that Theo and Liddy are one.

March 25.

If I had a more definite address than "Post-office Box 23," I'd go to Allentown and patrol your house until I caught a glimpse of you.

A few days ago, I was looking up Allentown on the map of Pennsylvania with a view to trying my luck at finding you, when I saw that it was in Berks County; and I recalled the fact that I have a cousin living somewhere in that locality, the wife of a Lutheran pastor in a small village. I couldn't find the village on the map, but I wrote to her that the moment she had read my letter, she must abandon her home and family, repair to her county seat, Allentown, and not depart from thence until she had found out the local address of one "Lydia Berger, Post-office Box 23," an—as yet—unknown genius whom I must at once, with my cousin's aid, discover. I told her that I depended upon her, as a thoroughgoing and enterprising young woman, to send me as soon as possible all the information obtainable about the said Miss Berger.

Now, although my cousin and I have always been very great friends, we do *not* carry on an extensive correspondence with each other; so you may fancy with what feelings I received, two days later, her long, friendly, and perfectly irrelevant reply to my letter, in which she did not once so much as indirectly refer to my urgent inquiries! What am I to infer? Obviously, she *knows* you, Theo—is in your confidence and is aiding and abetting you in your effort to conceal yourself. I shall certainly invite myself to pay an early visit to my dear relatives in Virginsburg! Did you ever hear of the

place? My God! I begin to think it's the village of *your*—our story! Am I getting warm?

May 25.

But now that the book is so much greater a success than even I had expected it to be, why, *why*, Theo mine, am I still put off? *Why* may I not come to you? I beg you have mercy! I have been patient. I have submitted to your wishes against the fiercest desire my heart has ever known. I can't submit any longer. Tell me I may come—or, by Heaven, I'll come anyway!

June 1.

I would be utterly cast down by your information that you have been betrothed for nearly two years, if I were not confident that no other man can be so truly your mate as I am. My faith in that fact is like unto the faith of Job in the goodness of his Jehovah! I am comforted, also, by your assurance that there is no immediate prospect of your marriage. Tell me this—it's very important—does your fiancé know of your novel?

June 10.

I had thought to catch you in a trap! I know that Elmer Wagenhorst, who carries "Liddy's" photograph about in his breast pocket, does *not* know anything about "A Village Tragedy" except what I have told him. Now, surely, if "Liddy" is Theo, he *would* know, wouldn't he? Why is it so difficult to make you commit yourself?

June 15.

It is very, very hard to have to wait until after the long summer vacation before I may meet you! The only reason I consent is that I think I surmise what your reason is for this cruel exaction: You want to try out that young man of yours and see whether he is, after all, as satisfactory as you had supposed him. I can only hope that my epistolary style is such as to have made you lose all taste for *him*!

June 18.

So, you do actually live in the same village as my cousin, Mrs. Armstrong! And your name is "Fitzenberger," and I may write to you hereafter directly to your home! Well, for small favors I must be grateful. And I promise to respect your wish that I shall make no attempt at present to meet you; trusting to the kind ways of Providence to make you fall so completely out of love this summer with your Elmer, or "whoever"—as the people of our book would say—that

when you do come to Collegeville in the fall, you will come a heartfree maiden—or enslaved only by your warm interest in your publisher.

July 14.

My beautiful Theo—for you *are* beautiful!—I know at last that Liddy and Theo are one! Elmer Wagenhorst, I have just discovered, lives in Virginsburg, Berks County, Pennsylvania. That is proof enough for me! That 'small Pennsylvania-Dutch village could hardly harbor *two* divinities—a face like Liddy's and a mind and soul like Theo's!

I tell you I was excited this morning when I saw Wagenhorst's address on my sister's desk, for it banished my last doubt. I feel that the gods are too good to me, and that Nemesis may be at my door. For, Theo, I did *want* you to look just like Liddy. And now if Nemesis dares to interfere, we'll defeat her sly schemes! Wagenhorst is not good enough for you! A man who sees life as he does, "through a glass darkly," must not marry one who sees it with *your* clear vision—for that would mean misery for you both. In order to let you prove that for yourself this summer, I'll keep away, biding my time with what patience I can command until next fall—when you will come to me, dear Theo. I know that you will come to me!

Slowly and thoughtfully Liddy gathered her letters together and put them away carefully in a drawer.

She went to her window, opened it, and leaned out. The rain had ceased, and the moon was sailing across the heavens, high and bright. She drew in a long, deep breath.

"I am free! Free to tell him to come to me if I want to! I did not know how I longed for it—how unfaithful I was to Elmer in my thoughts—how entirely I did not love him! And now I am free of everything that has shackled me—of the disgrace upon my name, because I have made it honorably famous; of dependence upon my dreary home, because I may now live where I please; of lack of education, because I have studied and learned and shall go to college. I am free! To live—and to love—and to work!"

# When I Was Common

By Mary Patterson

Author of "Trouble," "Another Queer Thing About Parents," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD THOMAS DENISON

More Pages from Anne's Diary

JANUARY 10. They have named it. With lilies and salad and ice cream and the minister. He said (the

baby said it not the minister) ah goo-goo gurgle-gurgle several times, and



when the water dripped on his funny little fuzzy head he shrieked oh how he shrieked. Father bit his lips to keep from roring, and

mother blushed oh, how she blushed. I suppose it was because her beautiful baby boy had such manners before the minister and all the company.

But I certainly was surprised afterwards. I never was so surprised in all my life, because there is something that I have done better than that child of theirs. I heard mother say so to father after every one had gone. She said, wasn't he naughty, now Anne behaved beautifully when she was chris-sened don't you remember dear, how she lifted those great questioning eyes of hers when Dr. Stowe said Anne Owen I baptize thee. And father said I only remember at just that sy-colog-ic—oh, some queer moment not on the clock—she doubled up like a jackknife and grabbed her new pink slippers and tried to put her foot in her mouth. But mother was firm and she said yes but she didnt scream though, and father

said of course not her mouth was full of foot—and of course a boy *would* yell, any boy would that is a good old sport. Then mother said did you notice dear how his hair curled up into those little silken ringlets when the water touched his head and father said and then you blame him for yelling no wonder he shrieked with a blue bow on his shoulder and curls on his head—and he my son and then they began all over again what father was *not* going to have inflicted on *his* son, and mother just smiled and smiled and I came up stairs.

But what *do* you think they've named the poor little thing. Christopher Carstairs Owen, mind you! And it's after that portrait in the dining room, the one that I never look at on purpose because it's such an ugly old man. But he is the most stylish part of the family we have and there's been much talk about him. I heard them say he is in the peerage book and that is a book of a very particular kind. I wonder if it costs more to get in than in the telephone book. You have to pay all of the time to stay in the telephone book. I suppose the difference is in the binding. Anyway there is where the man is, and that is one reason why the poor little baby had to be named for him. I said what a shame, and mother said why don't you like it darling, and I said it was an awful name especially when he was getting run over in the street by an automobile and you had



to call him in a hurry, there would never be time to say it all, and it would have been much better to have a short name that would be quick to yell at him, a quick name like Sandy. Then



father walked around and around a minute and rored and said it's up to you Nan, and mother—just arranged her lips a little and then she said, why

baby's name can be made quicker than that, you can call him Chris if you want to.

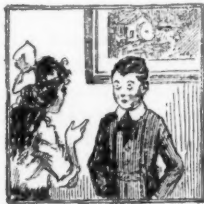
Just the same, I don't care much about the name. Oh, hum!

January 14th. Beatrice is full of indignation too. They've chris-sened their baby too, and she is very indignant. She wrote me that it would have been a very decent party if they had had a respectable name like Gervase or something with a Don to it, but no they had to call it Thaddeus, and Thad for quick. She says *she* thinks it has a wild sound and they certainly could have found something in some poems that would have been much better. But they simply wouldn't. No indeed, because some one in the family named Thaddeus has a lot of money, and Trixy is sure they have got their eye on it and she thinks the baby's name is just a hint for it, and we have been told *never* to hint for things. Beatrice wrote that she thought they might have asked her about a name for her own little brother, but of course, parents never ask their children about names. They just go ahead. She said if they had asked her she thinks she knows a name that isn't Gervase, and it hasn't a Don to it, either, but it is to memory dear because he has gone to a far distant clime. I wonder what name she means. Trixy doesn't always say right

out what she means. She reads poetry and has thoughts like the man who stood on the bridge at midnight while the clock was striking the hour, and the moon rose over the city behind the dark church tower I know it myself.

January 15th. Sandy came in this afternoon for just a minute to show mother a letter he got from his mother and father out in Japan while he is here at Newman's School. They are very glad to have us take an interest in Sandy and to have him at the house. They think perhaps when they come back they will stay here too, instead of going back to Trixy's town where there isn't such a good prep school, and they are going to bring Anne and Beatrice some pretty parasols. After while I told Sandy about the name and he says Chris isn't so bad, and I oughtn't to kick because the old duffer in the dining room was certainly some swell, and when the kid grows up the fellow's will lick him if he swanks about it, so it won't do him any harm. He called the little thing Cricket right away and it laughed at him and said ah-goo-goo gurgle-gurgle, and grabbed his hair which father thought was very clever and ath-e-letic, and Sandy said believe me he certainly's got some fist.

I told him about what they had named Trixy's little baby brother, and he says Thad isn't so bad either, but



Trix was red-headed because they hadn't called the kid some gosh-durned name like Sandy, and I said how *ever* did you know and he said why.

she wrote it to me. I was never so surprised in all of my life. I said first, he oughtn't to use such language, and he made a deep apology and said that Trix was so full of her nonsense that "it

made him tired, and then I said how many letters does she write you and he said oh, quite frequent.

I said she never told me she wrote you so many letters and he said oh, she'll get over it after while and stop pinin' as soon as some new fella fell for her. And I said, whatever do you mean? Fella fell? and he just laughed and laughed and said oh you kid you certainly are on the square it's just plain English for you. And then he said, that's one reason you're such a peach, beside being a looker, you're so honest, no deceivin' stunts about you—that's what I've told the fellas.



After he had gone father said at dinner what makes you so chipper to-night little Anne? Are you terribly happy about that Japanese parasol? And I said what does a fella say when he falls for you, and father said ye gods and little fishes and rored, and mother sank back in her chair with the stare in her eyes. And I don't know yet, but Beatrice will be pleased when he does, especially if his name is Ger-vase.

*January 17th.* Oh, hum. After all this fuss and trouble about the baby and getting him named, he isn't any use to me at all. I just watch him and wait for him to laugh and that's not really useful. He would be much more useful if he was old enough to go out with me and take me places or bring other boys here to visit or go to dances. He will never be big enough to play with Sandy, because he'll play with boys then that are babies now.

Sandy—13 years.

Chris—1 year (he isn't but just to keep out of fractions.)

Then in 11 years Sandy will  $13+11$  which is 24 Ans. and of course he would not be playing with a little boy so young. Then, I will be plus 11 too

which is 22, and I'll not care about boys of that age either. I'll probably be a lady by then with all my manners learned and nothing to bother about any more. Perhaps I'll have a little girl by then and be busy trying to make her manners as good as mine that I don't have to worry about. That would be a good thing about being grown up besides wearing a train and hair pins and rings, there is no more trouble about manners.

But mother said tonight at dinner that all children have to be begun with early and she says boys should be begun with just as early and as much as girls. And then father said, for heaven's sake Nan are you going to teach the boy to drop a curtsy for heaven's sake. Father really looked scared and his eyes were very wide open, and mother just smiled and smiled.

Father has a horror of his son not being common. He wants him to be very common, and not particular about germs.

*January 20th.* I had a letter from Beatrice to-day, and I suppose they have about the same kind of talk at her house that we have. Of course they would have because parents are all alike. But the longer Beatrice thinks about things, the more furious she gets and the more she writes. She says it makes her so furious to hear them argue about all the good times that belong to boys because they are boys, when she has always been hampered having good times by being made a perfect lady so much. She says when she grows up some more she is going to be a sufferingjest.

The letter was very long and got more and more furious because they had brought her in that afternoon to do some French over. She said in the letter of course when the wonderful

Thaddeus is a little bigger *he* will get out just as much as ever *he* pleases, and stay out French or no French. *He* will run away and have people hunt for him and have adventures being common and dirty. Dear Anne, we must be indignant and not endure it. We must be common now or never. Were we ever allowed to hang around the garage? No. Were we ever allowed to jump on a street car when it was going? No. Were we ever allowed to bring in other boys when they were filthy with mud? No. Were we ever allowed to go out and find nintimate friends without our parents looking them over first? No. (Do you remember the awful fuss we had about the party and Pansy and Rosamond? Yes.) Do they love nurses and governesses? No. Anne, let us be common before it is forever too late. Promise me you will think up something common. I'll never speak to you again if you don't. *Nev-ver*. Strike for your alters and your fires strike for the green graves of your sires



God and your native land now don't forget you promised. That is Trixy's letter. I never can copy one of her letters, and just be done with it.

I have to think about it afterwards and now she's made me promise to think more. Oh hum. I know you have to chew gum to be common, and make a noise doing it. That's a good start.

P. S. Another thing is to say Uh huh and never say thank you or I beg your pardon. Another thing is to snatch and grab. Another thing is to talk very loud through your nose. Another thing is say cheese it. Maybe Sandy could tell me some more, only I don't suppose he will because he made that deep apology for saying the word he said but



that was when he was so exasperated with Beatrice's letter. But I've promised to think some common thoughts, and you've got to be

loyal to your best friend.

January 24th. I did ask Sandy. It was when I was coming home from school and he jumped out at me from around a corner and carried my books and wanted to know if there was any chocolate cake at home. But he just stopped and stared at me when I asked him. He said now Anne whatever's eating you and I told him Trixy said we must be common now or it would be forever too late, and that we must strike for our alters and our fires. And Sandy said I mighta known it was something or other Trix had in that noddle of hers, and *he* wasn't going to tell me how to pull any stunt like that and get himself in bad with my mother and father and Cricket nosiree, not on your life.

Julia was in the kitchen when we went in and she got us the chocolate cake and Sandy gave some of the icing to the Cricket and Julia screamed oh murder Mr. Sandy and made him some lemonade. But he couldn't stay very long, and didn't wait to speak to mother but sent his regards. He had to rush back he said so he could sneak in before ole Doc Newman got wise that he'd sneaked out. I said weren't you allowed to come out and he said not to-day, and ole Doc Newman was so stingy about giving him any change and he had the most awful thirst for cake so he sneaked. I said is it common to do that and he said oh yes all the fellas get away with it once in a while it's a common trick.

P. S. Then that would be something common to do. Run away from school

with a girl and get some cake. And not let any one know. I'll write and tell Beatrice that's a common trick of boys and to try it too, or it will be forever too late.

*February 6th.* It seems years and years and years. Oh hum. But it was only a little while ago one day after school when I was waiting a minute wondering if it was going to rain and Marie Finch ran out of school saying things to herself and pushed against me she was so mad. She said oh I *beg* your pardon and stuck her elbow in me again. I said whatever's eating you and she just stopped the quickest I ever saw any one stop in all my life and she stared and stared and stared. Then when she'd stared again she said Is that really you Miss Stuck-up or are you a fake, and I said whatever do you mean. And she said I mean are you a little sly fake or are you the little stuck-up swell too good for the common hurd, that's what I mean. You've certainly got some slang all right all right and your mother and father throw fits if they could hear you say such common language and I said Oh I would like to be common a while before dinner and she said you nut I dare you to come home with me even, I dare you and I said have you any chocolate cake and she said well of all the graft come on. So I went and we walked and walked and she told me what made her so mad. Miss Stratton kept her after school again and said it would be impossible for her to come to that school any more because she did not conform and she violated all the spirits of the school and her influence was not what she approved of and a lot more that I forget.

Anyway Marie was mad because she said her mother would raise the devil about it and her father wouldn't dare open his head as he never did about anything. But her mother said she would keep her child in the swellest school in town or take it to court and

she herself hated the old Stratton school anyway and wanted to be fired and flunked on purpose so she could go some place and learn to do something with her hands instead of *parlez-vousing*. When we got to the house and she said to her mother this is Miss Anne Owen her mother said not *thee* Owen and she said Uh huh her mother just flopped into a chair full of puffs.

And when we were eating cake in the dining room full of all kinds of glass I heard Marie's mother call to some one the kid's hooked that swell Owen child we'll get there yet old man. Marie's mother is pretty and not pretty too. Her hair is yellow.



It is yellower than honey and the comb and she had very blue ear-rings in her ears and more rings on her hands than I had ever seen on hands before. She had on a very lace waist and it was very smooth and she kept her hands on her hips and chewed gum. So they were common. I could not have found a better place.

We ate the cake and then went to a moovie around the corner and Marie's mother said now be sure and get reserved seats as you *always* do, and didn't take no common seat. After the moovie I said I must go home now and thank you so very much and Marie said I'll go home with you and I said Oh no thank you ever so much and I walked the other way as fast as I could.

And then it rained and I ran into a doorway so I would not get wet. And I waited and had more thoughts like the man on the bridge at midnight and I didn't think the adventure of running away and being common like a boy was as nice as Beatrice said, if they didn't know where to hunt for me if they

were hunting and I wished they were. I had to wait in the doorway out of the rain for quite a very long time and when it stopped I ran down the steps as fast as I could and then I heard some one yell hi there and I heard some one else scream Anne Anne and there was our car right there and Sandy jumped out before it stopped and jerked me to the car before father could get out.

Father was driving and he put his arm around me and kissed me and Sandy stood on the running board and wouldn't sit in the back. Father gave Sandy a nickel to telephone mother that I would be home right away. When we got home there wasn't much talk. Mother was pleasant but quiet. I never heard so much stillness before in my life at our dinner. They seemed to know all about things and didn't ask about anything and I don't know who told them as much as they seemed to know. They only laughed once at dinner and that was when father told mother that Sandy insisted upon going bareheaded in the car so the wind would blow his hair and he would look like the man in the moovie who is pursuing the villain and father said Sandy told him to drive like—and mother heard what word father meant but I wasn't looking.

I was very glad to see Cricket. Julia said he didn't worry, but mother did and put her head down on my desk and wiped her eyes.

That night they went to the theater for nerves.

*February 8th.* I haven't written to Trixy about it all yet. But my mother and her mother have written two letters in one week. I suppose they're talking about it. Father called it the common occurrence and mother said please don't dear. They had much to say at dinner in the mystery way and it is best to ignore something although

she is very glad to have the insight or sight in of someone's intense and dramatic temperment because it will help in the future and her little rebellious fits are mostly romance. I suppose they know what they are saying. I only know they were talking about Beatrice.



P. S. Father asked me what moovie I saw that time and I'd forgotten the name but told him I didn't look when the man killed the woman with a knife. Mother said you didn't like it did

you dear, and I said no not the parts that I looked at, but the seats were very good because Marie always sat in reserved seats and was *never* allowed to sit in the common seats.

*February 9th.* When I was coming home from school today Sandy jumped out at me from behind the big tree at the corner of the park and took my books. He said Gee whizz I'm getten so nervous keepin' tab on you. I've had to stand on the top of that old wall around ole Doc Newman's every day so I could watch you go straight home I was so afraid that Maree would slink up to you again and you'd do that common stunt again. The strains wearin' me out but I'll tell you what I'll do. Ole Doc Newman'd only give me two dimes and a nickel so the man sliced me 20 cents of violets and I got 5 cents of licorish gumdrops and they're goin' to be a plege Sandy said. And he said you promise me you'll cut the common with your hand on em.

So I put my hand on them and promised. Sandy shook hands and when he got to the corner he put his hands to his mouth and yelled hi there and waved his cap around his head. His head looks like the copper bowl mother puts wall flowers in.

P. S. It is very strange that the most nice and pleasant part of being common was when I promised not to be.



# Ol' Tight

By William D. Chandler

Author of "Billy Carpenter," "Shingle Shad," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

Bobby Andrews, cutting wood at five cents a week, staggers his little world by a sudden leap into high finance.

A N indolent breeze, summer laden, loafed lazily along the village street. Occasionally a flurry of dust arose, the plaything of a half-drowsy puff of air. Heavy weighted and clumsy, a bumblebee thumped his head against the white picket fence, causing a ripple of mirth among the impudent maple leaves. Scarcely a sound disturbed the monotonous mid-day quiet.

Suddenly there was a screech, raucous and long drawn, that suggested a Halloween rosin string on a window-pane. The sultry atmosphere seemed to be split wide, and along the avenue thus opened whizzed a bicycle. The coaster brake was jammed hard, and the wheel came to a stop in front of a dilapidated building that disgraced the thoroughfare. A boy leaped to the ground.

Inside the ramshackle shed, ten-year-old Bobby Andrews deserted a stick of wood that he had been wrestling into place across the sawbuck. He fixed an eye to a knot hole, his face twisting into a corkscrew as he sought to extend his vision to cover the form outside.

A new picture glided into range.

"Mattie and him is always ridin' together on their bikes," he sighed.

Again his face twisted itself out of shape as his eye followed the pair pedaling slowly up the street.

"Wish I had a bike!" he mumbled mournfully.

He picked up the saw and set his knee against the log. The blade of steel gnawed at the wood, the boy's head with its shock of tousled brown hair bobbing up and down as his shoulders rose and fell. For a moment he hacked away furiously.

"Why couldn't daddy have been somethin' besides a preacher?" he puffed. "They don't never make no money."

Again the saw jabbed at the log, but the attack was short-lived. He mopped his face dejectedly, his fingers leaving a wide smear across a red cheek.

"Fi' cents a week!" he complained.

Suddenly he leaped to the ground and fished into a trouser pocket, bringing forth a handful of treasures. From the collection, he selected a stub of chalk and, using the rough wall as a blackboard, began to cipher.

"Fi' cents a week into a dollar is twenty times."

He stood back the better to survey the result.

"Gee! Twenty weeks before I get a whole dollar!"

He inspected the figures again, but could find no error that promised encouragement.

"Bet if I was Uncle Jabez, and rich like him, I'd give a kid more'n fi' cents a week for doin' all this work—cuttin' the wood and carryin' it in and ever'thin', all the time."

Once more figures were traced on the wall.

"Twenty weeks is a dollar, and a bike costs twenty dollars." He worked out the problem carefully. "Twenty weeks times twenty dollars is four hundred weeks."

The result was even more staggering than he had anticipated. A feeling of resentment took possession of him as he surveyed the chalked calculations.

"Ol' Tight!" he snapped.

There was a grunt at the window behind him. With a start, Bobby recognized it. He pretended not to hear, but quickly tried to obliterate the words he had unconsciously traced on the boards. A joyless cackle rattled in his ears.

"Ol' Tight, eh?"

Bobby turned swiftly. He tried to feign surprise, but his red ears proved his guilt.

"That's a fine thing for a boy to be sayin' of his uncle that's givin' him a chance!" the man accused. "Most boys would be mighty glad to earn five cents a week, and some of 'em would be savin' their money, instead of squanderin' it as fast as it comes in."

Jabez Andrews was in his glory. The pain that the slur had caused was more than compensated for by the opportunity it offered to preach on his favorite subject.

"When I was a boy, five cents a week wasn't to be sneezed at, and when I got holt of five cents, I slapped her into the bank quick as you could bat your eye. And it stayed there, too."

On went the harangue, for Uncle Jabez, once started, was not easily stopped. How long it continued the boy did not know. His mind had scampered off woolgathering. He was brought back to the woodshed with a jump.

"Well? That's a fair proposition, ain't it? To come from an 'ol' tight'?"

Bobby's face flushed as he tried to hide his embarrassment. His heart

gave a sudden leap. Uncle Jabez drew a wallet from his pocket.

"Well, how much have you got to start with?" the thin voice asked.

Again the boy was puzzled, but a light had begun to dawn. His fingers dug far down into a capacious pocket and once more the handful of treasures was produced. After much searching, a single copper penny was unearthed.

"A cent, eh?" cackled Jabez.

The wallet opened. A handful of gold and silver was spilled out into the shaking palm. Bony fingers began dipping into the pile nervously. The sharp eyes went close to the glittering pieces. A finger drew a yellow coin apart from the rest. Bobby's mouth opened wide, but a moment later his hopes were dashed down. Into the hand he was instructed to hold forth Uncle Jabez laid a bright new penny.

"Now!" he ejaculated, his countenance lighting up.

The boy did not enthuse. The man noted the evident lack of appreciation and it nettled him.

"Still thinkin' about 'Ol' Tight,' eh?" he exclaimed, a scowl overshadowing the glow on his face. "I reckon you'd be satisfied if I hired some other boy to cut the wood."

"Oh, I didn't mean to," Bobby hastened to say. "I was just kinda—I'm much obliged." His face brightened. "Maybe, if I save up quite a while, I'll have enough to buy a bike."

"Mebbe so; mebbe so," Uncle Jabez replied doubtfully. "But it wan't by buyin' bikes that I got my start. It was by huggin' ever' penny I could get my fingers on."

The heavy cane thumped on the board walk, a signal that Uncle Jabez was about to move off. For a moment Bobby feared he was to remain in ignorance of the terms of the agreement, but Jabez could not go without a parting admonition.

"Now remember," he patronized,

"ever' day you show Uncle Jabez how many pennies you got saved up, and he'll give you one for ever' one you can perduce."

Air castles innumerable tumbled down about Bobby's ears and fairly littered up his thoughts.

"I might have known it wasn't anythin' much he was givin' me!" he grumbled.

The bent shoulders turned slowly, and again the heavy walking stick thumped the boards. Then the joyless cackle rattled once more.

"Ol' Tight, eh?"

Bobby reddened and did not look up until the sound of the shuffling footsteps had died away. The first bell rang for school. He dropped the coins into his pocket and dusted his trousers with his cap, making his way slowly down the alley to the street.

"I wonder what he did when he was a kid," the boy muttered, his thoughts still with his rich uncle. "Wonder if he ever had a girl. Bet he never did. Gee, he must have. He had a wife once."

He stopped in his tracks, and his brows wrinkled in troubled thought.

"Wonder if she starved to death!" he breathed, awe-stricken.

Quickly he glanced about, fearful that some one might have read this ter-



The result was even more staggering than he had anticipated. A feeling of resentment took possession of him as he surveyed the chalked calculations.

rible thought. He found himself staring into the window of a candy shop. Unconsciously, his fingers began playing with the pennies that reposed in his pocket. The coppers seemed to clank against each other like a pair of iron dollars. Uncle Jabez' lecture, or snatches of it, came to his mind.

"Aw, what's two cents?" he defended. "What I want's a bike."

A foot was firmly planted on the

steps of the candy store when that hated siren with the rosin-string screech again pierced his ears. The thing seemed to be jeering at him. He turned swiftly, to hide the tears of mortification, and hurried toward the schoolhouse.

"Feller's got no business bein' born if he can't ever have anythin'," he complained bitterly to himself. "Preachin's no good job, anyway. When I get big, you bet I'm goin' to get a job drivin' a drag!"

Instantly he was ashamed of this veiled criticism of his father.

"Anyway, I'll have four cents tomorrow when Uncle Jabez pays me," he consoled.

The idea developed.

"And if I save that, next day I'll have eight cents."

He began to get excited.

"Gee! And eight plus eight is sixteen!"

Mentally he totaled the sums, working out each problem slowly and deliberately.

"Two plus two is four; four plus four is eight; eight plus eight is sixteen; sixteen plus sixteen is—— Let's see——"

He had reached the dizzy heights he was able to attain without the aid of a pencil and a lot of paper. He quickened his steps, hurried across the broad school yard, and found his way to his classroom and his own desk. Feverishly he drew forth a tablet. His long-neglected arithmetic followed.

Five minutes later, he was buried so deep in the mathematical trench he had dug for himself that even his rival's malicious grin proved ineffective as that favored individual strode into the room.

The afternoon session was a long one to Bobby, and interruptions seemed continual. If he was not engaged in a recitation on which he found it impossible to fix his mind, he was annoyed by Miss Grey, his teacher.

"If she knew what I'm doin', I bet she wouldn't be so smart," he muttered once.

The gong rang at last. Bobby gathered up his papers and slammed his books into the desk, retaining only the arithmetic. One foot was already in the aisle when Miss Grey's voice snapped across the room.

"Robert Andrews will please remain after school."

The boy was on his feet in an instant, indignation stamped on his face.

"I can't, Miss Grey," he exclaimed, before he realized what he was saying.

"Please be seated, Robert," commanded the teacher.

Bobby sank into his desk, mortified. The others filed out with many a grin and smirk. When they had gone, the grim visage of the teacher softened. Instead of calling him to her desk, she went to his.

"Bobby, I just wanted to tell you how pleased I am that you are taking a greater interest in your arithmetic," she began.

The boy flushed. He was not the sort to accept praise that he was not entitled to, but to explain meant to take her into his confidence, a thing he was not prepared to do. For a moment the battle raged within. Then:

"Miss Grey, if you had a penny, and I gave you another one, and the next day I gave you two pennies, and the next day four, and kept givin' you ever' day as many as you had, how many weeks would it be before you had enough to buy a bike, if you saved 'em all and didn't spend any of 'em—not even for jaw crackers or anythin'?"

She was taken aback for an instant by the sudden change of subject, as well as by the unusual problem he had offered.

"Well—I don't know, Bobby. How long would it take?"

"Won't you help me figure it out?"

"That's what I've been workin' on all afternoon," he confessed.

Miss Grey stepped to the blackboard and took up a piece of chalk.

"Now state the problem again."

"You got a penny. And I say to you that I'll give you ever' day as many pennies as you got."

Bobby stood breathless as the figures strung out into a full column. Miss Grey was absorbed in her task. For a time the boy was forgotten.

"How much does it all make, Miss Grey? How much?" he urged finally.

She did not answer at once. Instead, she stepped back and surveyed the numerals in perplexity.

"What in the world—— Where did this idea originate? Who put this nonsense into your head?"

"'Tisn't nonsense, Miss Grey. I'm workin' for it. Uncle Jabez is goin' to do it. He's rich, and he's always growlin' because I don't save my fi' cents a week that he gives me for sawin' the wood, and he said to-day he'd give me a penny for ever' one I could show him ever' day."

A sudden light dawned in the woman's consciousness. The shadow of a smile played about her straight mouth, as the possibilities of the agreement suggested themselves. She had not forgotten that Jabez, as a member of the board of education, had demanded every sort of economy, even to trimming salaries that already were much too small.

"Bobby, how much does a 'bike' cost?" she asked.

"Oh, twenty dollars!" the boy exclaimed, awed at the mere mention of so great a sum.

"If your uncle did as he agreed for only thirty days, do you know how much money you would have?"

"Gee, Miss Grey, not—not enough to buy a bike? Aw, it wouldn't be that much. Because, at fi' cents a week that I get for cuttin' the wood, it takes four

hundred weeks to get twenty dollars. I figured it out."

The woman looked at him for a moment as if undecided whether to proceed. Then she turned and placed a row of figures on the board. Bobby stared at the result.

"What's that?" he asked incredulously.

"Ten million, seven hundred and forty-five thousand, four hundred and eighteen dollars and twenty-four cents," Miss Grey read slowly.

He could not believe his ears.

"Aw, rats!" he exclaimed disgustingly.

It was painfully slow work, but with the aid of slips of paper on which she set down the amount due each day, she was able at last to force the truth upon him. When he had grasped the magnitude of the thing, he studied the sum in wonderment.

"Then I could have a bike, couldn't I?" he whispered.

For a moment neither spoke. Then Bobby rose.

"Miss Grey, can I go now?"

"Yes, Bobby."

Gathering up his papers, he hurried to the door, but retraced his steps and bent over the desk to copy the thirty-day total on a crumpled sheet. The arithmetic was brushed aside. It was not needed. A better authority had presented.

"Good night, Miss Grey," he sang out, as he snatched his cap from a hook on the wall and slipped through the door.

"Good night, dear."

When he had gone, the woman stood for a long time studying the problem. Then she sank into a seat and, letting her head rest on her folded arms, she gave way to a fit of laughter that brought a stream of tears to her tired eyes.

Bobby dashed out of the building and across the yard. Selecting the short-



est route home, he clattered along the walk as fast as his legs would carry him. He reached the little parsonage and burst into the hall leading to his father's study. The rugs softened the sound of his boots as he galloped toward the door. A voice reached him, and he stopped abruptly. His father was speaking.

"I had hoped to remain here at least until I could finish my book, Mary. It would have lifted us out of the financial depths. But that work must be given up now. It's only because we were called to this quiet place that I attempted it. I do regret the years of toil that must prove in vain. But the salary already is pitifully small; to accept less is impossible. We must go away."

Bobby heard no more. Quietly he backed out of the hall and as quietly let himself out the door. For a brief period he stood like one stunned.

Suddenly his eyes snapped excitedly. Only a moment more he remained irresolute. Then he dashed

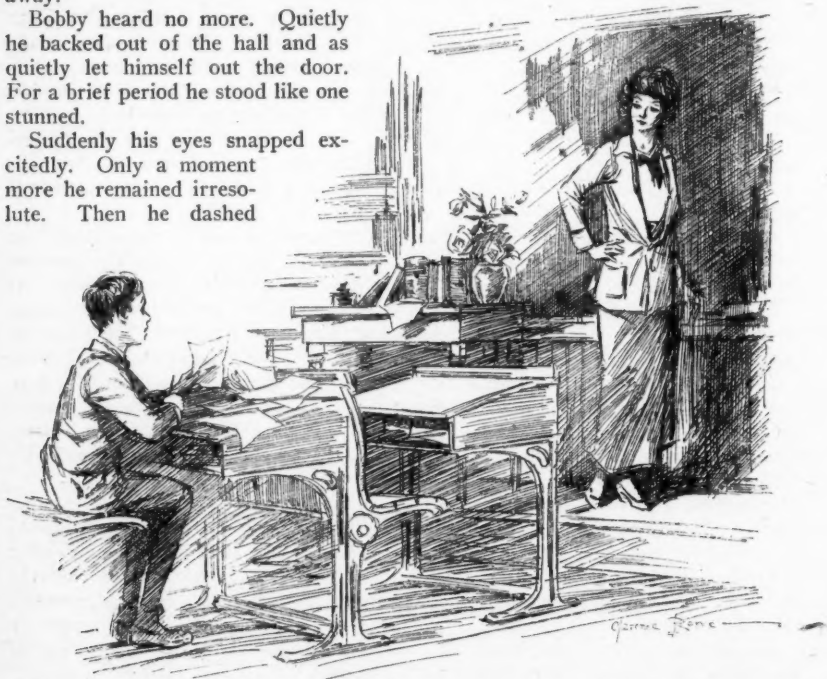
away toward the town square. He passed the candy shop without so much as a glance into the window. For the first time in months, the display of bicycles in front of the hardware store failed to interest him. He raced on until he came to a small, one-story brick building. In gold letters on the door was the inscription:

**HENRY CONNOR,**

**Banker.**

He paused for an instant as his eyes fell on a "closed" sign, for it was after banking hours. Then his fingers sought the latch. The door gave way, and he strode in boldly.

"I want to see Mr. Connor," he told the clerk.



"Bobby, I just wanted to tell you how pleased I am that you are taking a greater interest in your arithmetic," she began.

Bobby's chest swelled as he began to realize the importance of his mission. The clerk turned away, but it was unnecessary to transmit the message. A pudgy little man, with a shining bald head and twinkling eyes set in a round and ruddy face, stood in the door of the private office.

"Want to see me, sonny? Come in."

Bobby entered and sank into a big leather chair.

"What's the trouble, boy?"

"I want to borrow some money,"

Bobby faltered, finding it hard, even under such favorable circumstances, to keep up his courage.

The twinkling eyes danced.

"Well, how long will you want it?" the banker asked, enjoying the situation immensely.

"Thirty days."

The answer came with such promptness that the little man gasped.

"What do you want it for? You see it's usual for us bankers to know."

"Oh, that's all right. Business," laconically.

Mr. Connor found it hard to restrain himself.

"Business, eh?" he drawled. "And how much do you require for this—business?"

"Ten million, seven hundred and forty-fi' thousan', four hundred and eighteen dollars and twenty-four cents."

The ruddy face became ruddier than ever, then almost purple. Bobby feared the man had suffered a stroke. He was about to summon the clerk when the suspense was ended by an explosion that seemed to shake the building. Finally, by a supreme effort, the pudgy man subdued himself. Then there was a fresh outburst that was controlled only when the fat fists pounded on the table for order.

During the performance, Bobby had not lost his sober, businesslike expression. He wondered if Mr. Connor treated all his clients in this manner.

The banker seemed to realize the impression he had created, for the hilarity vanished suddenly. He leaned far over the table until his blue eyes looked into Bobby's.

"Tell me about this business," he urged.

Briefly the boy related the story of the years of wasted labor, and what it meant to his father to have to give up his literary work. The recital was graphic in its earnestness. Connor became very grave.

"Now, my boy, what have you got to offer as security for this—this advance?" he asked kindly. "And how do you expect to repay it at the end of thirty days? Will your father's book bring in so much—at once—do you think?"

Without a word, Bobby drew forth a handful of crumpled sheets and pushed them toward the banker. Connor studied the mathematical jumble. After a moment he looked up, puzzled. "It's all right," Bobby assured him. "Miss Grey figured it out. And she ought to know. She's my teacher at school. See here."

As carefully and as painstakingly as Miss Grey had explained the problem to him, he unfolded it to Connor. As the explanation proceeded, the banker and his client flattened themselves on the table, their legs sticking out on either side like the armament of a gunboat. Closer and closer they squirmed until the shock of brown hair threatened to become transplanted onto the shining dome.

The door opened abruptly. James Benjamin, editor of the official county weekly, strode into the office. Connor and his client seemed unconscious of the man's presence. After a moment, the fat body of the banker began to quiver and wobble with a series of chuckles.

Benjamin eyed the little man gravely for a moment; then snorted. Connor

looked up quickly. Bobby frowned at the interruption, but when he recognized the visitor as Mattie's long-legged daddy, he climbed into a chair hurriedly.

The twinkle was in Connor's eyes and he was beginning to wobble again when Benjamin asked:

"Well, what's it all about?"

Instead of answering, the banker pressed a button that summoned the clerk.

"Slip across the street and ask Jabez Andrews if he can step over a minute," he instructed.

For a few moments the three sat without exchanging a word. Only the chuckling of the banker broke the stillness. Bobby was perplexed. As he debated the problem inwardly, Uncle Jabez was ushered in. Connor rose and faced his guest.

"Well, Uncle Jabez, how are you?"

"Oh, jest tol'able, jest tol'able, Henry." Benjamin and the boy were ignored. "Money's tight, Henry. Money's powerful tight."

"Yes, it is, Uncle Jabez," Connor responded. "And that's why it struck me as being mighty generous of you to make Bobby the offer you did. We've just been closing up his banking arrangements."

"Bankin' arrangements?" exclaimed the miserly uncle incredulously. "Why, he ain't got but a couple of copper cents. How's he goin' to do any bank-in' business?"

"Well, that's a fact, he hasn't got much money, but he tells me you made him a financial proposition."

"Well, now, Henry," Jabez apologized, "you know these is pretty hard times. Money's tight, Henry, and I couldn't do much for the boy."

The banker turned to Bobby.

"Suppose you write down just what this agreement was."

The boy, who had been a silent, but interested spectator, got into action at

once. A stubby pencil traced carefully across the sheet. When the document was finished, Connor read it aloud; then turned a questioning gaze on Jabez.

"That's correct," the latter admitted with a smirk.

"Let's get it signed up, then," Connor suggested.

Bobby's signature was affixed promptly, but Uncle Jabez, always chary of putting his name to papers that had to do with finances, studied it from all angles before he could be induced to sign. At last the scrawled characters of the man and the boy were properly witnessed, and Connor rose.

"That's all, Uncle Jabez," he said.

The miser was not at all pleased at this sudden dismissal, but before he could frame his thoughts into words, he made a discovery that was even more disconcerting. The banker's fists were busily ironing out creases that kept gathering about his mouth. Jabez glanced swiftly toward Benjamin. There was a suspicious gleam in the eyes of the long-legged editor.

"Now, Henry, that ain't bad for jest a boy," the miser whined. "A cent a day, Henry, it ain't bad."

"No, it isn't bad, Uncle Jabez," Connor assured him. "You'll be surprised how fast his little account will grow."

Jabez turned to the door more disturbed than ever. His fingers were on the knob when he was halted.

"Oh, say, Uncle Jabez," the banker said, as if recalling a half-forgotten matter. "Do you know John is having a pretty hard time? They can't pay his salary over at the church, and he's got to leave us."

"Yes, I know it," snapped the miser. "But they can't bleed me to keep up that good-for-nothin' church, jest because John's a brother of mine. It's no fault of mine that he's a preacher and can't support his family."



"And at the end of thirty days, the boy will have just this amount——" Jabez's cane clattered to the floor.

"You wouldn't feel like advancing him, say five thousand dollars, then?"

"For whut? Great Jerusalem! For whut?"

"Well, he's deep in a big literary work, and if he has to leave now——"

"Not a penny!" Jabez interrupted testily.

"All right, then. I'm going to let him have a few thousand."

"Whut? Well, don't expect me to pay it. If that's whut you're figurin' on, don't expect it."

"I don't."

"Then how's he goin' to secure you?"

"I'm going to advance it on Bobby's account. He's a client of mine now, you know. And I think, under this

agreement he has with you, we'll find his funds growing pretty fast."

"Yes. A cent a day. Pretty fast, eh?"

"Well, you see, to-morrow he'll have two cents."

"Whut if he does? Whut's two cents?"

"Next day he'll have four cents."

"Well, four cents. Whut of it?"

"Next day it'll be eight."

"How—how's that?"

"Next day it'll be sixteen."

"How do you make that? Whut of it, anyway?"

"At the end of the first week, he'll have a dollar and twenty-eight cents for you to cover."

The lines drew tightly about Jabez's thin lips.

"At the end of the second week, he'll have a hundred and sixty-three dollars and eighty-four cents," the banker went on mercilessly.

"He won't either! That's a lie! What's the matter with you? Are you crazy?"

The hand that held the cane trembled.

"At the end of the third week, Bobby will have twenty thousand, nine hundred and seventy-one dollars and fifty-two cents."

A dry rattle sounded in Uncle Jabez's throat.

"And at the end of thirty days, the boy will have just this amount——"

Connor drew a paper from the drawer before him and spread it out on the table. His finger pointed to the last item of a long list of figures. The amount was \$10,745,418.24.

Jabez's cane clattered to the floor. He tried to fix a pair of silver spectacles across his nose, but his fingers trembled. When the bows were finally hitched behind his ears, he snatched the paper from Connor's hand.

Bending over the table, the miser studied the total. Then his eyes went upward until they reached the first figure, representing the single copper cent with which the boy had started his account that day. A lean finger traced down the column again, totaling the amounts due each day.

The man's wizened face went yellow. On his forehead moisture stood in little beads like pinheads.

"Tain't legal," he muttered.

Suddenly the full import of the thing came to him.

"Tain't legal!" he shrieked.

Snatching up the cane that Bobby had restored to the table, the miser hammered the floor in wrathful indignation.

"You can't make it stick in the law!" he bellowed. "Tain't legal, I tell you!"

"Maybe it isn't, Uncle Jabez," Connor shot back, "but I'm going to advance Bobby five thousand dollars in cash right now, and take a chance of collecting from you under this agreement."

Jabez stood trembling, while the banker drew a wide book from his desk and wrote a check. He signed his name, blotted the pad deliberately, and handed the slip to Bobby.

"Fi' thousan' dollars!" the boy cried in bewilderment. "Gee! Daddy can have——"

An idea occurred to him. He dug the stub of pencil from his pocket and helped himself to a piece of paper from the wastebasket. Laboriously he set down the problem that had flashed into his mind.

"Gee whiz, Mr. Connor, they's a lot left!" he exclaimed excitedly. "When do I get the rest?"

Jabez got his voice again.

"I'll fight you all!" he snarled. "Tain't legal, and you know it!"

"Jabez, see here a minute," Benjamin broke in. "I haven't had such a good story in my paper for a month, and I swear I'm going to print it if it runs you out of the State. I've wanted a chance like this, anyway, ever since you squeezed me the way you did last summer."

"This here's blackmail!" shouted Jabez, the walking stick threatening to punch holes in the floor. "It's blackmail, I tell you! I'll have the law down on the whole pack of you!"

"If you don't go to law, I'll have to," Connor laughed; "for I'm going to sue you every day you fail to keep your part of this agreement. Now remember," he added. "To-morrow it's two cents; next day four; eight next day; dollar twenty-eight end of first week; hundred and sixty-three something end of second week; twenty thous——"

"Now see here, Henry," Uncle Jabez



interrupted. "This here's blackmail, and it ain't legal and all that——"

"Now, you see here, Uncle Jabez," Benjamin mimicked. "We don't want any compromise."

"Now, Ben, I didn't do you no great harm," the miser begged. "You owed me the money honest——"

"And you'll owe this boy the money 'honest.' This is a fair-and-square agreement just like the other was."

"Well, now, let's talk it over," Uncle Jabez urged.

"We'll have to leave that to Bobby," said Connor. "I'm merely his banker, you know. What have you to offer?"

"Well, I'd be willin' to give him, say five dollars."

"Aw, rats! What's fi' dollars?" interjected Bobby, whose ideas of wealth had changed mightily during the afternoon. "Besides, I got to pay Mr. Connor fi' thousan'. Ain't I, Mr. Connor?"

"Yes, the least we could consider would be five thousand."

The miser protested every inch of the ground he was forced to surrender, but he finally sank into a chair and, trembling in every fiber, asked for a blank check.

"I'd have to keep that starvin' preacher out of the poorhouse, anyhow," he muttered, "but I didn't expect to be robbed, to boot."

The check was drawn, but just as the

nerveless hand steadied itself to affix the signature, Bobby jumped to his feet.

"Say! Look here!" he broke in. "I got to have more'n that."

Connor and Benjamin rose to their feet, alarmed. They had bluffed through a splendid bargain in the interests of their friend, John Andrews, and were satisfied. Bobby was not to be silenced by their mysterious signals.

"Aw, that's all right," he declared. "Ever'body's gettin' what they want but me."

"Well," Connor was forced to ask, "how much do you think you ought to have?"

Once more Bobby's stubby pencil went into action. After a moment he pushed a sheet of paper across the table.

Jabez glared at the boy, but made a correction on the check. When it was signed, he tore the slip from the stub, looked at the paper longingly, and passed it to Connor. Slowly the miser rose, the cane thumped twice on the floor, and Uncle Jabez ambled out.

When the outer door had closed, Bobby leaped to his feet and started off.

"Just a minute, boy," Connor called, glancing at the check that he held.

"This extra twenty——"

He was interrupted by the crash of the glass door as it closed behind the boy's retreating form. Above the din a voice rang clear:

"Aw, ain't I got to have a bike? Gee whiz!"

## PAY FOR HIS WORK

**T**HERE are still people who do not understand that a doctor's advice is more valuable than his medicine.

A patient who had been gruntingly "under the weather" for several weeks complained to the doctor that his medicine was doing him no good.

"Have you followed my directions, Jim?" asked the doctor. "Have you quit eating meat? Do you walk four miles a day, sleep with your windows open, and take a cold bath every morning?"

"See here, doc," said the patient disgustedly. "I'm hirin' you to do this job. If I've got to cure myself, I'm goin' to collect for it."

## When We Talk Things Over

YOU have probably heard "Pinafore," "The Mikado," or some other of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. At any rate you are familiar more or less with some of the words and music, and know what charming melodies and what innocent, wholesome merriment is treasured up in those entertainments which for over a generation have never failed to delight every one who has heard them. It may interest you to know, therefore, that the production of "Pinafore" marked an entirely new era in English musical comedy. Immediately before that time, the general style of this sort of entertainment had sunk so low that decent people were inclined to keep away from it altogether. It was vulgar, it was dull, it was immoral. Now, it is none of these things. The reform is due to no preaching, no efforts on the part of reformers, no laws. It came about partly through a natural disgust that indecency is sure to breed in the long run, and partly through the discovery on the part of the public that decent things are by no means dull, and that the worst dreariness in the world is that stupidity that strives to make immorality and license take the place of wit, invention, and genuine feeling.

IT is easy to make a sensation with tainted literature. It requires less ability, less knowledge, less ingenuity to write. It can be given very brilliant colors, but it is just as sure to sour on the mental palate as artificially colored, cold-storage foods are sure to disagree with us. In SMITH'S we have always played the game straight and never given you anything that could

not be guaranteed as pure, genuinely wholesome fiction—such things as you could safely give to any young girl to read. Either this number or the next, which contains a novel by Robert Adger Bowen, a novelette by Virginia Middleton, and seven remarkable short stories, is sufficient proof that there is nothing dull about good fiction.

AS a matter of fact, the worst thing about decadent stories that claim to show life as it is, is their inherent falsity to life itself. Every story of that kind is an effort to prove something that the whole history and experience of man has disproved—that moral laws may be broken without penalty and that wrongdoing may be a wiser, a nobler, a more attractive thing than doing what is right. Such a thesis is to our way of thinking plain nonsense, as well as being immoral. Reading is a good habit; so are eating and sleeping. But if it takes honest, wholesome air and food to produce healthy, beautiful bodies, depend upon it it takes untainted stories to make beautiful souls and minds. We could say a whole lot of interesting things about the next issue of the magazine, but there isn't room for it here. It is everything a good American magazine ought to be, and we will guarantee it to have more real, genuine interest than the most sensational publication beside it on the stands.

There's more romance and charm in moral health than there is in disease. The love story that is true to human character, and that describes people who have principles as well as passions is the best sort of story, after all.



# Everyday Corrective Exercises

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters, inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

A FACETIOUS medical writer observes, "There was philosophy as well as humor in Dunder's witticism: 'Why does a dog waggle his tail?' 'Because the tail can't waggle the dog,'" and applies it to the fact that the various systems in the body—the bony, muscular, and nervous—are wholly dependent upon one another for action, so that what affects one must affect the others. Straight, well-formed bones are necessary to maintain an erect posture, and good musculature to carry the various motions—guided by the nervous system—into effect. How many of us inherit physical perfection and how many of us will transmit beauty of form to the next generation?

There can be no more glorious heritage than a sound mind in a sound body. No earthly possessions can compensate one for a halting speech, a dull mind, or a crooked frame. "As ye live, so shall ye be" should have added to it "and so shall your children be." We inherit physical characteristics even more than mental traits. We need but look around among our friends and ac-

quaintances—yes, in our immediate families—to see here a "hammer" toe or a bent finger, there a loose, lanky frame, or an abnormally short waist, or a peculiar gait signifying inequality of the long bones, and a hundred and one other oddities transmitted from generation to generation.

Perhaps the most familiar example of an inherited physical peculiarity is the Hapsburg lip, so prominent in the young ruler of Spain, the charming Alfonso, who comes by this through his mother, an Austrian. This remarkable exhibition of heredity has persisted in the royal house of Austro-Hungary and its ramifications through eighteen centuries, appearing in seventy descendants. It is first mentioned in history in connection with Cymburga, who was born in the last part of the fourteenth century. But we must not digress into the fascinating fields of heredity, however captivating the vista appears, but stick to our last, which in this instance is the important one of improving the physical form.

It is never too late to mend, and even

quite old people can make themselves more supple, and thereby more healthy and *agreeable*, by daily simple exercises. Of course, when one has not moved a joint for fifty years or more, except within a very limited range, it becomes *fixed* and is rather averse to performing "feats." The same applies to muscles that have become stiff and bone-like from sheer lack of exercise. The very position we assume when standing, and which becomes identified with us almost to the extent of our walk or gait, is in many instances faulty and calculated to throw the body out of "plumb."

Simply to practice the *fundamental standing position* over and over again is an excellent exercise in itself. Here it is:

The feet are planted firmly on the floor, the toes about ten inches apart, the knees well extended; the head is held erect, with the chin a trifle raised, pointing straight forward; the hands encircle the waist on either side with thumbs directed toward the spine; the shoulders are held down and back, brought close to each other. This correct standing position gives one a sense of perfect balance, of equilibrium, which the erect person instinctively strives for—to keep the head exactly in the middle, to keep the face to the front, and the shoulder girdle in the same plane as the pelvic girdle.

The mirror offers an admirable means for self-correction, where any slight deviations from a perfectly balanced body exist. Stand bared to the hips facing the mirror, in front of which hangs a plumb line. Stand so that the plumb line cuts directly through the middle of the pelvis. Now, by a *muscular effort*, bring the middle of the thorax and the vertical line of the face as nearly as possible into the line. No improvement will be effected if the feet and hips are moved; they are in the straight line, and must remain fixed.

The same method is pursued in determining the condition of the spinal column. Exactly the center of the pelvis is placed in the plumb line, and if any imperfections in the back exist, they at once reveal themselves.

The best time to begin to develop the body along beautiful, normal lines is in early childhood. When children leave the stage of babyhood, which is at the age of three, they should be taught to stand, walk, and breathe correctly, especially when there is the least disposition to be weak or a laggard; otherwise the shoulders droop, the spine curves, the chest sinks in, and the great internal organs are crowded out of position. But very young children should not be taught with any fixed, hard rules or with routine work. A child grows nervous under such training, and more harm than good comes of it. Almost every physical imperfection that hampers proper bodily development, whether inherited or acquired, can be overcome if parents will study the needs of their children and map out a line of play exercises for them that will gradually strengthen every tissue in the body.

The idea of a noted Swiss physical culturist has much to recommend it and is being pursued the world over by thousands of people, old and young. He declares that every defect of the body, even poor vision and unequal hearing, can be overcome by systematic *joyous* exercise. His course comprises the daily bath, flooded with air and sunshine, an out-of-door life if possible, and no fixed exercises, but every act performed in the pursuance of our daily lives executed with the conviction that we are getting the utmost joy and good out of it.

The writer has gone farther than this, and advocates exercises—especially for those past middle life—in *the bath*. These will be explained in a future article.

Some years ago an epidemic of in-

fantile paralysis swept over this country. It left many distorted little bodies in its wake. The highest medical minds turned their attention toward means whereby the crippled little limbs could be straightened, and among the most successful measures were passive exercises during hot-water baths.

Now, just as soon as a well child can be taught the importance of perfect health as dependent on physical development, he can be taught how to scrub his body by means of a coarse towel or a bath brush with long loops of heavy cotton webbing attachments. He must be taught the joy of keeping his body beautifully clean, the delight of immersing it in water, the value of daily ablutions, and the importance, to *perfect bodily development*, of the movements of arm extension, overhead arm raising, body bending, hip raising, and so forth.

On leaving the bath, every motion made for rubbing the body dry with a coarse towel should be emphasized and executed with this object in mind: to maintain bodily poise and to develop suppleness of muscles, with dexterity and precision in this accomplishment.

It requires less effort to inculcate these simple habits into the child's life than to let it to "just grow," Topsylike. Latterly there has been some talk of permitting "infants" to do only those things which it pleases them to do, and to be guided entirely by what appeals to them in the course of their march

from infancy to maturity. It is safe to say that, until a new era dawns, the average everyday child is quite unequal to the task of relieving its parents of this grave responsibility. In the case of girls, it would be decidedly better could they romp and play with greater freedom and abandon during and after reaching puberty; hemmed in as they

are by conventions, there seems to be no happy medium between hoydenism and squeamishness. When, however, a girl has been prepared from infancy for the changes that occur in her system at this period, she is physically so fit that no adjustment to "new" conditions is necessary. The normal physiological cycles occur as a matter of course, and she develops imperceptibly and naturally into a womanly woman, ready to assume wifehood and motherhood with sweet eagerness when the time comes.

However, the vast majority of girls, on reaching adolescence, show the effect of neglect of their physical growth in a marked sluggishness of all the muscular tissues, not only the voluntary muscles, but those

involuntary muscular fibers that compose the heart, stomach, and are found in the intestines. As a rule, these organs perform their functions reluctantly, digestion is slow, and constipation becomes habitual. The muscles are flabby—in some instances doughy—and this general lack of tone effects the entire being.



Playing "at" golf is delightfully stimulating.



Now, when a girl finds herself in this condition, she should at once take an interest in her everyday actions, beginning with the bath. Sponging piecemeal or in dribblets of warm water, bathing two or three times a week in a haphazard fashion, luxuriating and parboiling in a hot bath and lolling over the process for an hour or more, must all be rigidly taboo. A tepid bath with vigorous splashing and forcible rubbing of the body, followed by a graduated shower and rub-down, with body bending, leg raising, and arm extension, will alone induce a wonderful change. As much time as possible should be spent in the open in joyous exercise. A slow saunter or decorous walk will not answer. A steady, vigorous swing of arms and legs, with deep abdominal breathing, is better. Any girl can manage this much, no matter what her circumstances in life.

During the summer months, when the days are long, a good deal of time can be spent out of doors in play. Golf is one of the best possible exercises and is to be highly and persistently recommended. It can be played at any time, for any length of time, alone or in company. It can be played in all weather, by both sexes, at all stages of life. It can be played indoors as well as out of doors. The movements of golf are so admirable that they should form part of the everyday exercises, whether with sticks or without.

If one cannot get into the "atmosphere" and into the "swing" without a stick, any wand, cane, or lath will answer. Dumb-bells or Indian clubs may be used. It is not at all necessary to be within reach of a country club and play on the links. If these are inaccessible, play in a field, in your back yard, on your roof, in your bedroom—but *play*.

The "drive" illustrated herein is merely an exaggeration of the position one repeatedly takes while performing the daily bath. The arms extended the length of a Turkish towel are flung over the head and brought to the shoulders, where, with a sawing movement, they descend down the back. Now it goes without saying that when these various movements have been systematically executed as a matter of conscious effort toward the attainment of a symmetrical body, no physical defects are likely to be acquired by a grow-



This exercise is *supreme* for developing the correct lines of the body.

ing child, or even an older person.

To straighten the spine and correct any exaggerated curves in this column, especially when an enlarged abdomen exists, the simple exercise of bending the trunk and touching the floor with the finger tips is *supreme*. This exercise does more: It reduces abnormal deposits of fat, so common in mature years around the shoulders, under the arms, at the nape of the neck, through the loins. But it must be properly and systematically done. Although fre-

quently described in these papers, it will bear repetition.

All clothing must be loose, except in the case of women, whose breasts should always be snugly confined. When done indoors, flood the room with light and air. Stand firmly on the floor, heels together. Stiffen the legs, and at no time allow the knees to relax. Breathe deeply, and at the same time draw the abdominal contents up toward the thorax. Expand the lungs and fling the arms forcibly above the head. Now unhinge the body at the hips and bend forward, doubling it upon itself until the fingers rest upon the floor. Expel the breath. Throw the arms outward, not forward, but at right angles to the body; assume the erect posture, turning the arms at the shoulder joint until the palms are upward; raise them above the head until they meet. Repeat this exercise as often as possible, with intervals of rest between each ten "rounds." It is possible to do it one hundred times. Gone through perfunctorily, it probably does not have a particle of effect upon the tissues, but carried out with a "vim," precisely as described, the results are amazing.

In the middle-aged, it will be difficult to bring the body forward without bending the knees, as the muscles will be stiff; they will ache. After a while, however, the soreness will disappear, and it will become increasingly less difficult to touch the floor. A protruding abdomen remains a barrier to the full execution of this "feat" until, by persistent endeavor, it is literally forced into oblivion.

Like the "drive" in golf, this exercise is one which we can to a certain extent make part of the daily bath, and because it is so effective in developing a straight spine, it should be taught to children as soon as they have reached years of understanding. While in the bath or under the shower, the legs should be vigorously scrubbed until the toes are reached, the body being bent forward and downward as described above. The same procedure should be carried out again in rubbing the legs dry with a coarse towel.

If this exercise is practiced faithfully every day, it will be impossible for a protruding abdomen, fatty deposits, or spinal curvatures to develop—provided one is healthy in other respects.

### Answers to Queries

**CRIPPLED.**—From your description, your feet have been shockingly abused and neglected. You should go to a foot specialist and have them put in good shape, get proper footwear, and then, by home cure, keep them in condition. Directions for the treatment of corns and bunions will be sent on request.

**LIZA JANE.**—The treatment for freckles depends on their kind. This is also true of tan, a recent coat yielding to mild measures, whereas repeated exposures to the elements affect the deeper layers of the skin. Detailed advice on these matters would occupy too much space here. A stamped, self-addressed envelope will bring this to you.

**NURSING MOTHER.**—In a wide range of experience, I know of nothing to stimulate the flow of milk except the preparation made in Germany. American physicians have raised the question, and the state depart-

ment has been requested to exert its power that shipments may be made to us. Should this be granted the mothers and countless unborn of our country, I shall be overjoyed to let you hear from me.

**PALE FACE.**—Excessive pallor in one who evidently enjoys good health, as you do, should not be a hardship. Why not use a little harmless rouge? This bit of color may quite transform you. Directions for making it and appropriate powders to suit your needs will be sent to you on proper application.

**RUTH.**—Do you mean moles, freckles, or scars? I condemn interference with moles. Freckles and scars can be bleached out; so can moth patches and the like. You must remember that they do not appear in a day, so they cannot be removed overnight. Do you wish information as to treatment? Write again.

**COMPLEXION.**—This is an ideal time in which to make bleaching cosmetics. Cucumbers are plentiful. Nothing has a more soothing and whitening effect upon the skin than the juice of this vegetable. Instructions for making Celebrated Cucumber Milk, Cucumber Lotion, and Cucumber Cream will be furnished to you with pleasure.

**PORES.**—Send self-addressed, stamped envelope for treatment of enlarged pores.

**MR. T. E. B.**—Discolored "sclera," as the white of the eye is called, is caused, in nine cases out of ten, by effete matter in the blood that the liver has been unable to handle. Modify your diet. Drink plenty of water, especially mineral water. Send to me for the name of a liver and intestinal stimulant and tonic.

**ANXIOUS MOTHER.**—Thank you many times for your appreciation. I would gladly write on more intimate subjects for young girls. What is your special anxiety? I am the recipient of many confidences and you need not hesitate to give me yours fully.

**CANADA.**—Your letter has charmed me. It is delightful to realize that each month my little mite is eagerly awaited by an appreciative reader in a far-away place in God's out of doors. The matter you bring up is about going to press, and before very long you will be greeted by a discourse upon it. I am glad, however, that your impatience impelled you to write me, so that I have your sweet message. Thank you.

**ELLA.**—Directions for softening and perfuming the bath will gladly be sent you on proper application.

**GRAY HAIR.**—I receive many glowing letters attesting to the great value of iron, sage, and tar in restoring gray hair. Some are not successful. Why? You can guess! Do you want the directions for making and using Sage Hair Restorer? A stamped, self-addressed envelope will bring it to you.

**HOUSEWORK.**—Why will women not wear gloves in performing their housework? An article entering very fully into the care of the hands will soon be published. Meanwhile send me a stamped envelope, and I will forward directions for treatment of brittle nails, red hands, and so forth.

**HELEN.**—I fully appreciate all you say regarding the French formula for devitalizing superfluous hair. It is a slow process, very slow. Most of us do not possess the neces-

sary mental discipline to keep at a thing that is good and await lasting benefits. This is characteristically American and a deplorable national trait. Well, I cannot be persuaded into giving you a real depilatory; they are abhorrent to me. But I will compromise and let you have a formula that will not act too strongly in stimulating the hair follicles to renewed growth, for that is what most depilatories do:

Tincture of turpentine.....	50 minims
Oil of turpentine.....	100 minims
Castor oil .....	2 drams
Alcohol .....	5 drams
Collodion to make.....	4 ounces

In using, apply daily for several days, after which the film is removed, bringing the hair with it without causing pain.

**AMANDA.**—Granulated lids may be caused by eye strain. Too much care cannot be given these marvelous organs, but they are usually neglected. An eye wash to keep them clean, bright, *healily*, and therefore beautiful should be used every day, with salves and ointments to correct troubles of the lashes, only too common. Formula will gladly be sent to you for these on proper application.

**MIDDLE AGE.**—The spots you describe are not freckles. They are usually the result of a sluggish liver. We overwork this remarkable gland so that it cannot dispose of the bile pigments, and they get into the blood and deposit themselves on the skin. You require both internal and external treatment. A request, accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope, will bring it to you.

**MICHAEL.**—The X ray is sometimes used for obstinate cases of acne. This unpleasant condition usually corrects itself in the course of time, but leaves indelible marks in its trail that resemble smallpox pittings. Hygienic measures, with local treatment, are curative if faithfully adhered to. Are you interested in a cure?

**NURSE.**—It gives me the greatest pleasure to help you out. In removing adhesive strips that have been used as dressings, a little ether poured on the same will facilitate the removal by dissolving the glue. In ordinary cases, it can be taken off without pain by holding the skin beneath very taut. Surgeon's adhesive plaster is good for so many things that its uses deserve to be better known.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.




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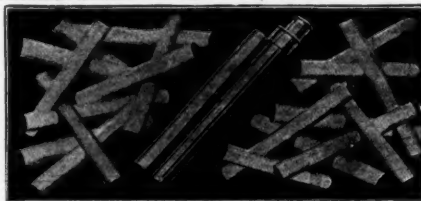


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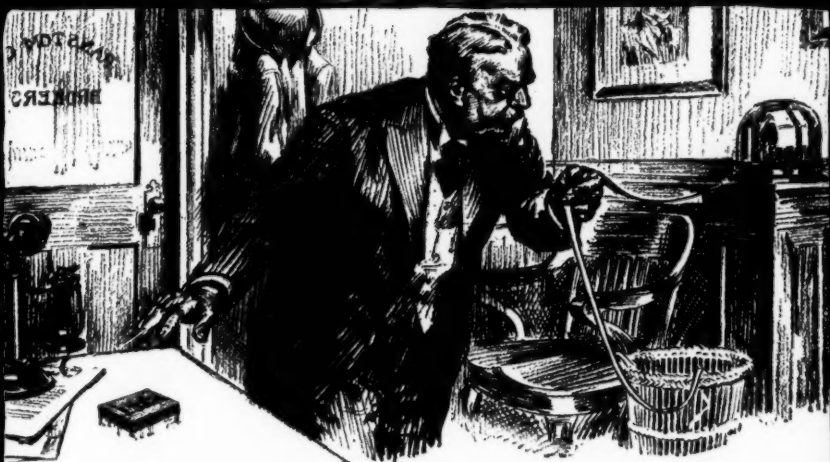
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